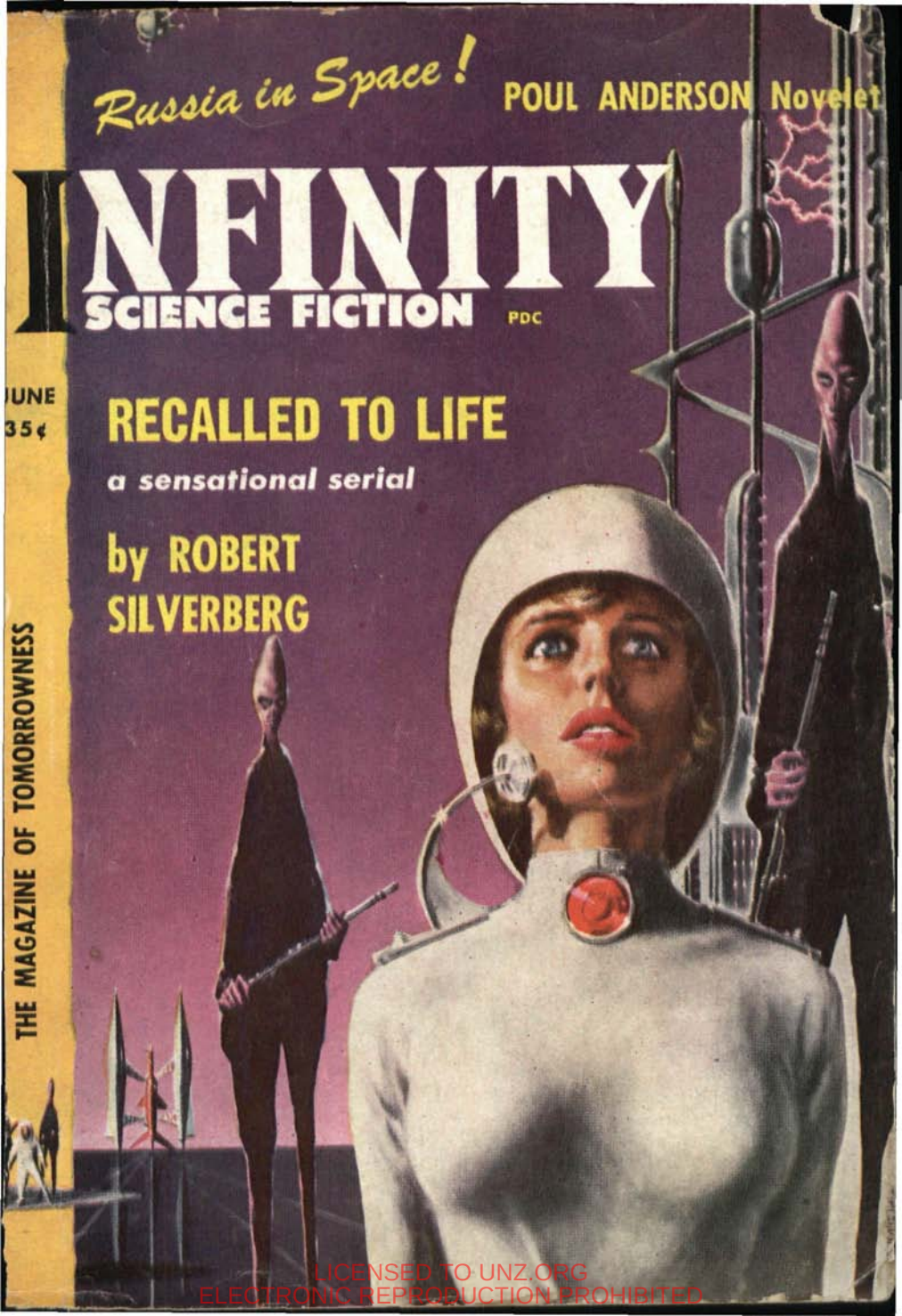

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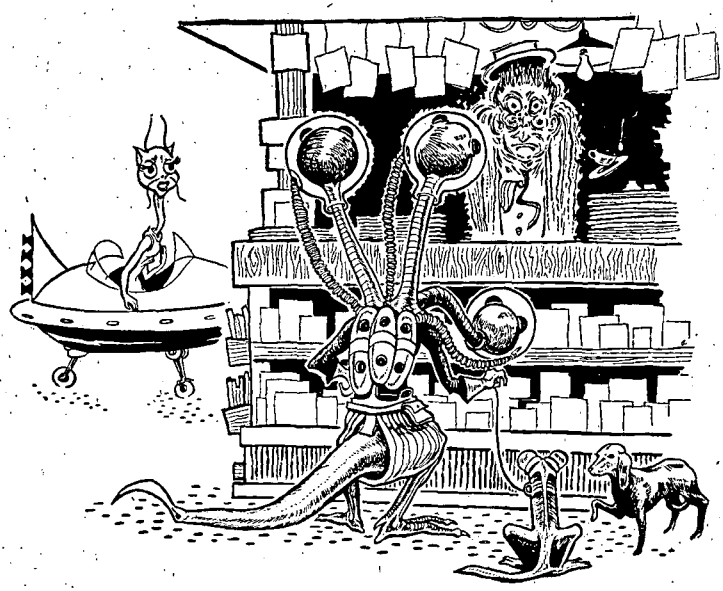

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AUG 9 '58

Infinity

SCIENCE FICTION

June, 1958

Vol. 3, No. 5

THE MAGAZINE OF TOMORROWNESS

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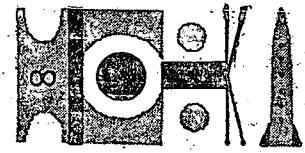
By the editor



ROUNDUP TIME AGAIN

AND NOW the news—leading off with bad news.

With this issue, INFINITY returns to a bi-monthly schedule. I'm as disappointed as you are, but it's a matter of sheer economic necessity. In other words, if you really want to see the magazine go monthly, make sure you buy every issue, and persuade your friends to do likewise. As soon as we can afford to, we'll take that delayed and desired step.

Meanwhile, the change in schedule calls for some reshuffling. The Robert Silverberg serial, "Recalled to Life," had already been accepted before we were forced to return to the less-frequent schedule. Originally, it was planned to run in three installments. Obviously, doing it that way would mean you'd have to wait four months for the entire story, and that's too long. The novel was too good to pass up, even if doing so wouldn't have been unfair to Silverberg—so you'll be getting it in two big chunks, with the second installment somewhat longer than the first. It will take up a major portion of the magazine this way, but I'm confident you'll agree that it's worth it. It's not only the best thing Silverberg has written so far, it's one of the best sf novels anyone has written.

TO TURN to something a little more pleasant, the 9th Annual Midwestcon will be held on June 28th and 29th at the North Plaza Motel, 7911 Reading Road, Cincinnati 37, Ohio. As usual, the gathering will be informal and lively, and many of your favorite writers, artists and fans will be there. The motel features central air-conditioning and a free swimming pool. Make your reservations directly to the motel, and I'll hope to see you there.

Slightly farther away, but galloping up fast, is the "Solacon"—the Sixteenth World Science Fiction Convention. The latest news on this is that Richard Matheson has been chosen guest of honor, and everybody who is anybody in the sf world has announced his intentions of being there. The committee of well-known fans staging the affair is

(*Continued on page* 100)

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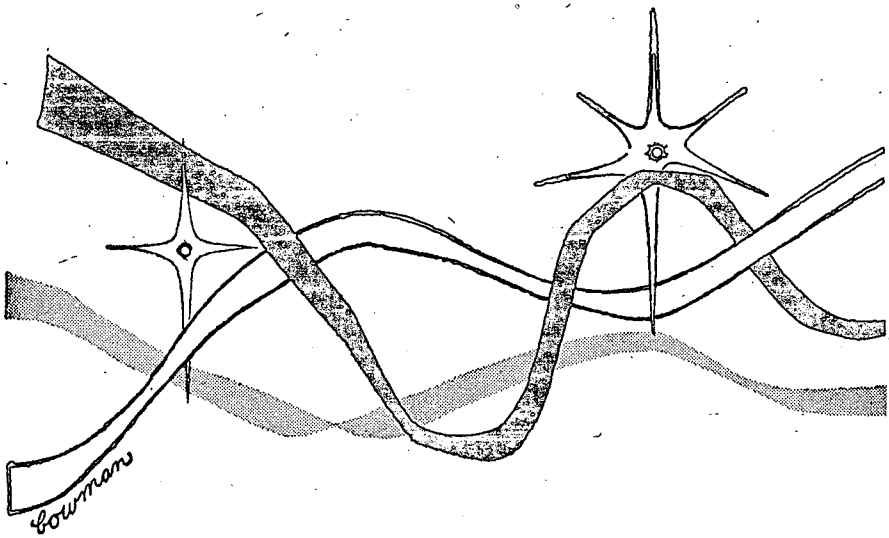
recalled to Life

It was the greatest scientific breakthrough of all time: reanimation after death. The trouble was, it created more problems than it solved.



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By ROBERT SILVERBERG

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Recalled To Life

By Robert Silverberg

Part I

CHAPTER I

THAT MORNING James Harker was not expecting anything unusual to happen. He had painstakingly taught himself, these six months since the election, not to expect anything. He had returned to private law practice, and the Governorship and all such things were now bright memories, growing dimmer each month.

Morning of an Ex-Governor. There was plenty to do: the Bryant trust-fund business was due for a hearing next Thursday, and before that time Harker had to get his case in order. A pitiful thing: old Bryant, one of the glorious pioneers of space travel, assailed by greedy heirs in his old age. It was enough to turn a man cynical, Harker thought, unless a man happened to be cynical already.

He reached across his desk for the file-folder labeled BRYANT: Hearing 5/16/33. The sound of the outer-office buzz trickled into the room, and Harker realized he had accidentally switched on the inter-office communicator. He started to switch it off; he stopped when he heard a dry, thin voice say, "Is the Governor in?"

His secretary primly replied, "Do you mean Mr. Harker?"

"That's right."

"Oh. He—he doesn't like to be called the Governor, you know. Do you have an appointment with him?"

"I'm afraid not. Terribly foolish of me—I didn't realize I'd need one. I don't live in New York, you see, and I'm just here for a few hours—"

"I'm extremely sorry, sir. I cannot permit you to see Mr. Harker without an appointment. He's *extremely* busy."

"I'm quite aware of that," came the nervous, oddly edgy voice. "But it's something of an emergency, and—"

"Dreadfully sorry, sir. Won't you phone for an appointment?"

To the eavesdropping Harker, the conversation sounded like something left over from his Albany days. But he was no longer Governor of New York and he was no longer the fair-haired boy of the National Liberal Party. He wasn't being groomed for the Presidency now. And,

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suddenly, he found himself positively yearning to be interrupted.

He leaned forward and said, "Joan, I'm not very busy right now. Suppose you send the gentleman in."

"Oh—uh—Mr. Harker. Of course, Mr. Harker." She sounded startled and irritated; perhaps she wanted to scold him for having listened in. Harker cut the audio circuit, slipped the Bryant file out of sight, cleared his desk, and tried to look keenly awake and responsive.

A timid knock sounded at his office door. Harker pressed the *open* button; the door split laterally, the segments rising into the ceiling and sliding into the floor, and a man in short frock coat and white unpressed trousers stepped through, grinning apologetically. A moment later the door snapped shut behind him.

"Mr. Harker?"

"That's right."

The visitor approached Harker's desk awkwardly; he walked as if his body were held together by baling wire, and as if his assembler had done an amateur job of it. His shoulders were extraordinarily wide for his thin frame, and long arms dangled loosely. He had a wide, friendly, toothy grin and much too much unkempt soft-looking brown hair. He handed Harker a card. The lawyer took it, spun it around right-side-up so he could read it, and scanned the neat engraved characters. It said:

BELLER RESEARCH
LABORATORIES
Litchfield, N. J.

Dr. Benedict Lurie

Harker frowned in concentration, shook his head, and said, "I'm sorry, Dr. Lurie. I'm afraid I've never heard of this particular laboratory."

"Understandable. We don't seek publicity. I'd be very surprised if you *had* heard of us." Lurie's head bobbed boyishly as he spoke; he seemed about as ill-at-ease a person as Harker had ever met.

"Cigarette?" Harker asked.

"Oh, no—never!"

Grinning, Harker took one himself, squeezed the igniting capsule with his index-finger's nail, and put the pack away. He leaned back. Lurie's awkwardness seemed to be contagious; Harker felt strangely fidgety.

"I guess you're wondering why I came here to see you, Mr. Harker."

"I guess I am."

Lurie interspliced his long and slightly quivering fingers, then, as if dissatisfied, separated his hands again, crossed his legs, and gripped his kneecaps. He blinked and swiveled his chair slightly to the left. Sensing that the sun slanting through the window be-

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hind the desk was bothering Lurie, Harker pressed the *opaque* button and the room's three windows dimmed.

Lurie said finally, "I'll begin at the beginning, Mr. Harker. The Beller Research Laboratories were established in 2024 by a grant from the late Darwin F. Beller, of whom you may have heard."

"The oil magnate," Harker said. *And a notorious crank.* The lawyer began to regret his impulsive action in inviting the gawky stranger in to see him.

"Yes. Beller of Beller Refineries. Mr. Beller provided our group with virtually unlimited funds, established us in a secluded area in New Jersey, and posed us a scientific problem: could we or could we not develop a certain valuable process? I'll be more specific in a moment. Let me say that many of the men Mr. Beller assembled for the project were openly skeptical of its success, but were willing to try—a triumphant demonstration of the scientific frame of mind."

Or of the willingness to grab a good thing when it comes along, Harker thought. He had had little experience with scientists, but plenty with human beings. Lurie's speech sounded as if it had been carefully rehearsed.

"To come to the point," Lurie said, uncrossing his legs again. "After eight years of research, our project has reached the point of success. In short, we've developed a workable technique for doing what we had hoped to do. Now we need a legal adviser."

Harker became more interested. "This is where *I'm* to come in, I suppose?"

"Exactly. Our process is, to say the least, a controversial one. We foresee multitudes of legal difficulties and other problems."

"I'm not a patent lawyer, Dr. Lurie. That's a highly specialized field of which I know very little. I can give you the name of a friend of mine—"

"We're not interested in a patent," Lurie said. "We want to give our process to mankind without strings. The problem is, will mankind accept it?"

A little impatiently Harker said, "Suppose you get down to cases, then. It's getting late, and I have a lot of work to do before lunch-time."

A funny little smile flickered at the corners of Lurie's wide mouth. He said, flatly, "All right. We've developed a process for bringing newly-dead people back to life. It works if there's no serious organic damage and the body hasn't been dead more than twenty-four hours."

FOR A LONG MOMENT there was silence in Harker's office. Harker sat perfectly still, and it

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seemed to him he could hear the blood pumping in his own veins and the molecules of room-air crashing against his ear-drums. He fought against his original instincts, which were to laugh or to show amazement.

Finally he said, "I'll assume for the sake of discussion that what you tell me is true. If it is, then you know you're holding down dynamite."

"We know that. That's why we came to you. You're the first prominent figure who hasn't thrown me out of his office as soon as I told him why I had come."

Sadly, Harker said, "I've learned how to reserve judgment. I've also learned to be tolerant of crackpots or possible crackpots. I learned these things the hard way."

"Do you think I'm a crackpot, Mr. Harker?"

"I have no opinion. Not yet, anyway."

"Does that mean you'll take the case?"

"Did I say that?" Harker stubbed his cigarette out with a tense stiff-wristed gesture. "It violates professional ethics for me to ask you which of my colleagues you approached before you came to me, but I'd like to know how many there were, at least."

"You were fourth on the list," Lurie said.

"Umm. And the others turned you down flat, I take it?"

Lurie's open face reddened slightly. "Absolutely. I was called a zombie salesman by one. Another just asked me to leave. The third man advised me to blow up the labs and cut my throat. So we came to you."

Harker nodded slowly. He had a fairly good idea of whom the three others were, judging from the nature of their reactions. He himself had made no reaction yet, either visceral or intellectual. A year ago, perhaps, he might have reacted differently—but a year ago he had been a different person.

He said, "You can expect tremendous opposition to any such invention. I can guess that there'll be theological opposition, and plenty of hysterical public outbursts. And the implications are immense—a new set of medical ethics, for one thing. There'll be a need for legislation covering—ah—resurrection." He drummed on the desk with his fingertips. "Whoever agrees to serve as your adviser is taking on a giant assignment."

"We're aware of that," Lurie said. "The pay is extremely good. We can discuss salary later, if you like."

"I haven't said I'm accepting," Harker reminded him crisply. "For all I know right now this is just a pipe-dream. Wishful thinking on the part of a bunch

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of underpaid scientists."

Lurie smiled winningly. "Naturally we would not think of asking you to make a decision until you've seen our lab. If you think you're interested, a visit could be arranged sometime this week or next—"

Harker closed his eyes for a moment. He said, "If I accepted, I'd be exposing myself to public abuse. I'd become a storm-center, wouldn't I?"

"You should be used to that, Mr. Harker. As a former national political figure—"

The *former* stung. Harker had a sudden glaring vision of his rise through the Nat-Lib Party ranks, his outstanding triumph in the 2024 mayoralty contest, his natural ascension to the gubernatorial post four years later—and then, the thumping fall, the retirement into private life, the painful packing-away of old aspirations and dreams—

He nodded wearily. "Yes, I know what it's like to be on the spot. I was just wondering whether it's worthwhile to get back on the firing line again." He moistened his lips. "Look, Dr. Lurie, I have to think about this whole business some more. Is there someplace I can call you this afternoon?"

"I'm staying at the Hotel Manhattan," Lurie said. He retrieved his calling-card with surprising deftness and scribbled a phone number on it, then a room number, and handed it back to Harker. "I'll be there most of the afternoon, if you'd like to call."

Harker pocketed the card. "I'll let you know," he said.

Lurie rose with typical lack of grace and shambled toward the door. Harker pressed the *open* button and the two halves of the door moved into their slots. Rising from the desk, he accompanied Lurie through the door and into the outer office. The scientist's stringy frame towered five or six inches over Harker's compact, still-lean bulk. Harker glanced up at the strangely soft eyes.

"I'll call you later, Dr. Lurie."

"I hope so. Thank you for listening, Governor."

Harker returned to the office, reflecting that the final *Governor* had either been savagely unkind or else a bit of unconscious absent-mindedness. Either way, he tried to ignore it.

He dumped himself behind his desk, frowning deeply, and dug his thumbs into his eyeballs. After a moment he got up, crossed to the portable bar, and dialed himself a whiskey sour. He sipped thoughtfully.

Resurrection. A crazy, grotesque idea. A frightening one. But science had come up with a method for containing the hundred-million-degree fury of a fusion reaction; why not a meth-

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od for bringing the recent dead back to life?

No, he thought. He wasn't primarily in doubt of the possibility of the process. It was dangerous to be too skeptical of the potentialities of science.

It was his own part in the enterprise that made him hold back. What Lurie evidently had in mind was for him to act as a sort of public advocate, arguing their case before the courts of law and of human opinion. It was a frighteningly big job, and if the tide swept against him he would be carried away.

Then he smiled. *What have I to lose?*

He eyed the tri-dims of his wife and sons that occupied one corner of his desk. His political career, he thought, couldn't be any deader than it was now. His own party had cast him loose, refusing to name him for a second term when he indiscreetly defied the state committee in making a few appointments. His law practice did well, though not spectacularly; in any event, he was provided for financially by his investments.

He had nothing to lose but his good name, and he had already lost most of that in the political mess. And he had a whole world to win.

Revival of the dead? *How about a dead career,* Harker wondered. *Can I revive that too?*

Rising from his desk, he paced round the office, pausing to depolarize the windows. Bright morning sunshine poured in. Through his window he could see the playground of the public school across the street. Thin-legged girls of nine or ten were playing a punchball game; he could hear the shrieks of delight and anguish even at this distance.

A sudden sharp image came to him: himself, nine years before, standing spread-legged on the beach at Riis Park, with Lois staring whitefaced at him and three-year-old Chris peeking strangely around her legs. It was a blisteringly hot day; his skin, to which sand had adhered, was red, raw, tender. He heard the booming of the surf, the overhead *zoop* of a Europe-bound rocket, the distant cry of refreshment-venders and the nearer laughter of small girls.

He was not laughing. He was holding a small, cold, wet bundle tight, and he was crying for the first time in twenty years. He huddled his drowned five-year-old daughter to him, and tried to pretend it had not happened.

It *had* happened, and Eva was dead—the girl-child who he had planned would be America's darling when he reached the White House, fifteen years or so from now.

That had been nine years ago. Eva would have been nearly fif-

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teen, now, flowering into womanhood. He had no daughter. *But she could have lived,* Harker thought. *Maybe.*

He returned to his desk and sat quietly for a while. After twenty minutes of silent thought he reached for the phone and punched out Lurie's number.

CHAPTER II

HARKER had an appointment with old Richard Bryant at three that afternoon. He was not looking forward to it. Since Bryant was confined to his home by doctor's orders, it meant that Harker would have to visit the old man, and that meant entering a house where death seemed to hang heavy over the threshold, a house filled with graspingly impatient relatives of the venerable hero of space travel's infancy.

At half past two Harker notified his secretary that he was leaving; he gathered up the portfolio of relevant papers, locked his office, and took the gravshaft down to street level. He emerged on First Avenue, and walked quickly downtown toward 125th Street.

It was a bright, warmish, cloudless May afternoon. A bubble of advertising was the only blot on the otherwise flawless sky. The Manhattan air was clean, tingling, fresh. Harker never breathed it in without thinking of the vast dynamos of the puritron stations every ten blocks apart, gulping in tons and tons of city soot each second. In his second year as Mayor, the entire Brooklyn puritron assembly had "accidentally" conked out for four hours, thanks to some half-forgotten labor squabble. Harker remembered the uproar *that* had caused.

At 125th Street he boarded the crosstown monorail and moments later found himself disembarking at the Riverside Drive exit. He signaled for a cab; while he waited, a bleary-eyed old man shuffled over to him, shoved a gaudy pamphlet in his hands, greeted him by name, and shuffled away.

He looked at it. It was one of the many official organs of the Watchtower Society. As he stuffed it in the corner disposal-bin, he smiled in recollection of that organization's motto: *Millions now living will never die.*

Gravely he proposed a substitute: *Millions now dead will live again.*

The attendant images effectively choked off the mood of good humor that had been stealing over him. He remembered that in only two days he would be journeying across the Hudson to see whether the Beller Laboratories people had actually hit on something or not.

The cab drew up. Harker slid

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into the back seat and said, "Seventy-ninth and West End, driver."

The house was a massive, heavily-chromed representative of late twentieth-century architecture, settling now into respectable middle age. Harker had visited it on three separate occasions, and each time his discomfort had increased.

It had no gravshaft; he rode up in a human-operated elevator. The operator said, "I guess you're going to visit Mr. Bryant, eh, Mr. Harker?"

"That's right."

"The old gentleman's been poorish lately, sir. Ah, it'll be a sad thing when he goes, won't it?"

"He's one of our greatest," Harker agreed. "Many people up there today?"

"The usual lot," the operator said, halting the car and opening the door. It opened immediately into the foyer of the huge Bryant apartment. Almost at once, Harker found himself staring at the fishy, cold-eyed face of Jonathan Bryant, the old man's eldest son.

"Good afternoon, Jonathan."

"Hello, Harker." The reply was sullenly brusque. "You're here to see my father?"

"I didn't come for tea," Harker snapped. "Will you invite me in, or should I just push past you?"

Jonathan muttered something and gave ground, allowing Harker to enter. The living room was crowded: half-a-dozen miscellaneous Bryants, plus two or three whom Harker did not know but who bore the familiar Bryant features. A horde of vultures, Harker thought. He nodded to them with professional courtesy and passed on, through the inner rooms, to the old man's sick room.

The place was lined with trophies — one room, Harker knew, consisted of the cockpit of the *Mars One,* that slender needle of a ship that had borne Rick Bryant to the red planet nearly fifty years ago, an epoch-making flight that still stood large in the annals of space travel. Trophy cases in the halls held medals, souvenir watches, testimonial dinner menus. Old Bryant had been a prodigious collector of souvenirs.

His doctor, a tiny man with the look of an irritated penguin, met him at the door to the sick room. "I'll have to ask you to limit your stay to thirty minutes, Mr. Harker. He's very low today."

"I'll be as brief as I can," Harker promised. He stepped around the barricade and entered.

Helen Bryant, oldest of the daughters, sat solicitously by her father's bedside, glaring at him with the tender expression of a predatory harpy.

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Harker said, "If you'll excuse me, Miss Bryant, your father and I have some important business to discuss."

"I'm his daughter. Can't I—"

"I'm afraid not," Harker said coldly. He waited while she made her proud retreat, then took her seat at the side of the bed.

"Afternoon, Harker," Bryant said in a tomblike croak.

He was not a pretty sight. He was seventy-three, and could easily pass for twice that age—a shrunken, leathery little man with rheumy, cataracted eyes and a flat, drooping face. There was little about him that was heroic, now. He was just a dying old man.

The needles of an intravenous feed-line penetrated his body at various points. He no longer had the strength to swallow or to digest. It was difficult to believe that this man had made the first successful round-trip flight to another planet, back in 1984, and that from his early thirties until his stroke four years ago he had been a figure of world importance, whose words were eagerly rushed into print whenever he cared to make a statement.

He said, "How does it look for next Thursday?"

Harker's jaws tightened. "Pretty good. I hope to be able to swing it."

"How have you set it up?"

Harker drew the papers from his portfolio. "Twenty million is to be established as a trust fund for your grandchildren and for the children of your grandson Frederick. Thirty million is to be granted to the Bryant Foundation for Astronautical Research. Fifty thousand is to be divided among your children, ten thousand to each."

"Is that last bit necessary?" Bryant asked with sudden ferocity.

"I'm afraid it is."

"I wanted to cut those five jackals off without a penny!" he thundered. Then, subsiding, he coughed and said, "Why must you give them so much?"

"There are legal reasons. It makes it harder for them to overthrow the will, you see."

The old man was reluctant to accept the idea of giving his children anything, and in a way Harker could see the justice of that. They were a hateful bunch. Bryant had garnered millions from his space journey, and had invested the money wisely and well; there had been an undignified scramble for the old hero's wealth when a stroke appeared to have killed him in '28. He had confounded them all by recovering, and by cutting most of them out of his revised will—a document that was being contested in the courts even while the old man still lived.

At three-thirty, the penguinish doctor knocked discreetly at the

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bedchamber door, poked his head in, and said, "I hope you're almost through, Mr. Harker."

At that moment old Bryant was trying to sign a power-of-attorney Harker had prepared; his palsied hand could barely manage the signature, but in time he completed it. Harker looked at it: a wavy scrawl that looked like a random pattern on a seismograph drum.

"I'm leaving now," Harker told the doctor.

Bryant quavered, "What time is the hearing next Thursday, Harker?"

"Half past eleven."

"Be sure to call me when it's finished."

"Of course. You just relax, Mr. Bryant. Legally they can't trouble you at all."

He reaped a harvest of sour glances as he made his way through the trophy-cluttered halls to the elevator. It was a depressing place, and the sight of the shattered hero always clouded his mind with gloom. He was glad to get away.

RIDING A CAB downtown to Grand Central, he boarded the 4:13 express to Larchmont, and eleven minutes later was leaving the Larchmont tube depot and heading in a local cab toward his home. At quarter to five, he stepped through the front door.

Lois was in the front room, standing on a chair and doing something to the ceiling mobile. Silently Harker crept in; standing with arms akimbo at the door, he said, "It's high time we junked that antique, darling."

She nearly fell off the chair in surprise. "*Jim!* What are you—"

"Home early," Harker said. "Had an appointment with old Bryant and the medics tossed me out quick, so I came home. Gah! Filthy business, that Bryant deal."

He slipped out of his jacket and loosened his throat-ribbon. He paused for a moment at the mirror, staring at himself: the fine, strong features, the prematurely iron-gray hair, the searching blue eyes. It was the face of a natural leader, an embryo President. But there was something else in it now—a coldness around the eyes, a way of quirking the corners of his mouth—that showed a defeated man, a man who has climbed to the top of his string and toppled back to the ground. With forty years of active life ahead of him.

"Hello, Dad. Want a drink?"

It was the already-deepening voice of twelve-year-old Chris that drew him away from his reverie. In recent months he had let the boy prepare his homecoming cocktail for him. But today he shook his head. "Sorry, son. I don't happen to be thirsty tonight."

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Disappointment flashed briefly in the boy's handsome face; then it faded. Minor setbacks like this meant little to a boy who had expected once to live in the White House, and who knew now it wouldn't be happening.

"Where's Paul?" Harker asked.

"Upstairs doing his homework," Chris said. He snorted. "The ninny's learning long division. Having fits with it, too."

Harker stared at his son strangely for a moment; then he said, "Chris, go upstairs and give him some help. I want to talk to Mum."

"Sure, Dad."

When the boy had gone, Harker turned to his wife. Lois at forty—three years his junior—was still slim and attractive; her blonde hair had lost its sheen and soon would be shading into gray, but she seemed to welcome rather than fear the imprint of age.

She said, "Jim, why did you look at Chris that way?"

In answer, Harker crossed to the table near the window and his fingers sought out the tri-dim of dead Eva, its bright colors losing some of their sharpness now after nine years. "I was trying to picture him as a teen-age girl," he said heavily. "Eva would have been fifteen soon."

Her only outward reaction was a momentary twitch of the lower lip. "You haven't thought of her for a long time."

"I know. I try not to think of her. But I thought of her today. I was thinking that she didn't have to be dead, Lois."

"Of course not, dear. But it happened, and there was no help for it."

He shook his head. Replacing Eva's picture, he picked up instead a tiny bit of bric-a-brac, a kaleidoscopic crystal in whose depths were swirling streaks of red and gold and dark black. He shook it; the color-patterns changed. "I mean," he said carefully, "that Eva might have been saved, even after the accident."

"They tried to revive her. The pulmotor—"

"No. Lois, I had a—a person visit me this morning. A certain Dr. Lurie, from a certain research laboratory in New Jersey. He claims they've developed a technique for bringing the dead back to life, and he wants me to handle promotion and legal aspects. For a fat fee, may I add."

She frowned uncertainly. "Reviving the dead? What kind of crazy joke is that?"

"I don't know. But I'm not treating it as a joke; not until I've seen the evidence, anyway. I made an appointment to go out to Jersey and visit their lab on Friday."

"And you'll take the job, if they've really hit on something?"

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Harker nodded. "Sure I'll take it. It's risky, of course, and there's sure to be a lot of public clamor in both directions—"

"And haven't we had enough of that? Weren't you satisfied when you tried to reform the state government, and wound up being read out of the party? Jim, do you have to be Quixote all the time?"

Her words had barbs. Harker thought bleakly that being able always to see both sides of a question, as he could, was a devil-granted gift. Wearily he said, "All right. I tried to do something I thought was right, and I got my head chopped off as a result. Well, here's my second chance—maybe. For all I know they're a bunch of lunatics over there. I owe it to myself and to the world to find out—and to help them, if I can."

He pointed at the tri-dim of Eva. "Suppose that happened *now*—Eva, I mean. Wouldn't you want to save her? Or," he said, making his words deliberately harsh, "suppose Paul dies. Wouldn't you want to be able to call him back from—from wherever he had gone?"

For a moment there was silence.

"Well? Wouldn't you?"

Lois shrugged, turning her hands palm outward. "Jim, I don't know. I just honestly don't know."

CHAPTER III

AT THREE MINUTES past two on Friday afternoon Harker's secretary buzzed him to let him know Dr. Lurie had arrived. Harker felt momentary apprehension. Cautious, even a little conservative by nature, he felt uneasy about paying a visit to a laboratory of—for all he knew—mad scientists.

He turned on an amiable grin when Lurie arrived. The scientist looked less gawky than before, more sure of himself; he wore what seemed to be the same rumpled clothing.

"The car's downstairs," Lurie said.

Harker left word at the front desk that he was leaving for the day, telling the girl to refer all calls to one of the other partners in the firm. He followed Lurie into the gravshaft.

The car idled in the temporary-parking area outside—a long, low, thrumming '33 turbo-job, sleekly black and coming with a $9,000 price-tag at the least. There were three men inside. Lurie touched a knob; the back door peeled back, and he and Harker got in. Harker looked around.

They were looking at him, too. Minutely.

The man at the wheel was a fleshy, hearty-looking fellow in his late fifties, who swiveled in

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a full circle to peer unabashedly at Harker. Next to him was a thin, pale, intense young man with affectedly thick glasses (no reason why he couldn't wear contacts instead, Harker thought), and sitting at the far side in back was the third, a coolly self-possessed individual in unobtrusive black clothes.

The fleshy man at the wheel said, "How do you do, Governor Harker. I'm Cal Mitchison—no scientist I, heh-heh! I'm public-liaison man for Beller Labs."

Harker smiled relatively courteously.

Mitchison said, "Man next to me is Dr. David Klaus, one of Beller's bright young men. Specialty is enzyme research."

"H-h-hello," Klaus said with difficulty. Harker smiled in reply.

"And to your left is Dr. Martin Raymond. Mart's the Director of Beller Labs," Mitchison said.

"Pleased to meet you," said Raymond. His voice was deep, well-modulated, even. Harker sensed that this was a man of tremendous inner strength and purpose. Raymond was a type Harker had seen before, and respected: the quietly intense sort that remained in the background, accumulating intensity like a tightening mainspring, capable of displaying any amount of energy or drive when it was needed.

"And you already know Ben Lurie, of course," Mitchison said. "So we might as well get on our way."

THE TRIP took a little over an hour, with Mitchison making a crosstown hop via the 125th Street overpass, then ducking downtown to 110th Street and taking the Cathedral Avenue rivertube across the Hudson into New Jersey. The village of Litchfield turned out to be one of those Jersey towns of a thousand souls or so that look just like every other small Jersey town: a railroad siding, a block or two of shopping center, bank, post office, then a string of old split-levels rambling away from the highway in every direction.

Mitchison, handling his big car with an almost sensuous delight, drove on through the main part of town, into the open country again, and about a mile and a half past the heart of the village suddenly turned up a small road prominently labeled PRIVATE: KEEP OUT. TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED.

The road wound inward through a thick stand of close-packed spruce for more than a thousand feet, at which point a road-block became evident. Two apparently armed men stood guard at either side of the road.

Mitchison opened the doors and the five occupants of the car got out. Harker took a deep breath. The air out here was

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sweet and pure, and not with the mechanical purity of Manhattan's strained and filtered atmosphere. He liked the feel of fresh air against his nostrils and throat.

Lurie said to the guards, "This is Mr. James Harker. We've brought him here to visit the labs."

"Right."

The guard who had grunted assent took a red button from his pocket and jammed it against Harker's lapel. It adhered. "That's your security tag. Keep it visible at all times or we can't answer for the consequences."

"What if it falls off?"

"It won't."

Harker and his companions followed around the road-block while Mitchison took the car somewhere to be parked. Harker saw three large buildings, all of them very old, and several smaller cabins behind them, at the very edge of the encroaching forest.

"Those are the dormitories for the researchers," Lurie said, pointing to the cabins. "The big building over here is the administrative wing, and the other two are lab buildings."

Harker nodded. It was an impressive set-up. The group turned into the administrative building.

It was every bit as old-fashioned on the inside as outside. The lighting was, of all things, by incandescent bulbs; the air-conditioners were noisily evident, and the windows did not have opaquing controls. Harker followed the other three into a small, untidy, book-lined room—and, suddenly, he realized that Dr. Raymond was taking charge.

"This is my office," Raymond said. "Won't you be seated?"

Harker sat. He reached for his cigarettes and Raymond interjected immediately, "Sorry, but no smoking is permitted anywhere on the laboratory grounds."

"Of course."

Raymond sat back. Klaus and Lurie flanked him. In a quiet, terribly sane voice, Raymond said, "I think Dr. Lurie has explained the essentials of our situation."

"All I know is that you claim to have perfected a process for restoring the dead to life, and that you want me to act as legal adviser and public spokesman. Is that right?"

"Indeed. The fee will be $600 per week for as long as your services will be required."

"For which you'll insist on my full-time participation, I expect."

"We have confidence in your ability, Mr. Harker. You may apportion your time as you see fit."

Harker nodded slowly. "On the surface, I don't see any objections. But naturally I'll expect a thorough demonstration of what you've achieved so far, if I'm to

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take on any kind of work for you."

Levelly Raymond said, "We would hardly think of employing you unless we could take you into our fullest confidence. Come with me."

He opened an inner door and stepped through; Harker walked around the desk to follow him, with Klaus and Lurie bringing up the rear.

They now were in a large room with the faint iodoform odor Harker associated with hospitals; it was brightly, almost starkly lit, and Harker saw two lab tables, one empty, one occupied by a dog, both surrounded by looming complex mechanical devices. A bearded, grave-looking young man in the white garb of a surgeon stood by the dog-laden table.

"Are we ready, Dr. Raymond?"

Raymond nodded. To Harker he said, "This is Dr. Vogel. One of our surgeons. He will anesthetize the dog you see and kill it."

Harker moistened his lips nervously. He knew better than to protest, but the idea of casually killing animals in the name of science touched off a host of involuntary repugnance-reactions in him.

He watched stonily as Vogel fitted a mask over the dog's face —it was a big, shaggy animal of indeterminate breed—and attached instruments to its body.

"We're recording heartbeat and respiration," Raymond murmured. "The anesthetic will gradually overcome the dog. In case you're concerned, the animal feels no pain in any part of this experiment."

Some moments passed; finally Vogel peered at his dials, nodded, and pronounced the dog in full narcosis. Harker fought against the inner tension that gripped him.

"Dr. Vogel will now bring death to the dog," Raymond said.

With practiced, efficient motions the surgeon slit the animal's blood vessels, inserted tubes, adjusted clamps. An assistant glided forward from the corner of the room to help. Harker found a strange fascination in watching the life-blood drain from the dog into dangling containers. The needle registering the heartbeat sank inexorably toward zero; respiration dropped away. At last Vogel looked up and nodded.

"The dog is dead," he declared. "The blood has been drained away. This pump will ensure oxygenation of the blood during the period of the animal's death. We will now proceed to the next table—"

Where, Harker saw, another dog had been placed while his attention had been riveted on the death scene. This dog lay in a

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slumped furry heap that grotesquely reminded Harker of Eva as she had looked when they pulled her from the sea. His throat felt terribly dry.

"This animal," Vogel said stiffly, "underwent the killing treatment nine hours and thirteen minutes ago. Its blood has been stored during that time. Now—"

Spellbound, Harker watched the surgeon's busy hands as he and the assistant fastened tubes to the dead animal's body and lowered a complicated instrument into place. "We are now restoring blood to the dead animal. When the indicator gauge reads satisfactorily, injection of adrenalin and other hormones will restore 'life' to the animal. The blood is being pumped back at the same rate and rhythm that the animal's own heart uses."

"In some cases," Raymond remarked, "we've restored animals dead nearly thirty-six hours."

Harker nodded. He was forcing himself to a realization of the gulf that lay between these calmly efficient men and himself. Yet they needed him and he needed them; neither type of mind was complete in itself.

The resuscitation of the second dog took fifteen minutes. At length Vogel nodded, withdrew the reviving apparatus. The heartbeat indicator was fluttering; respiration was beginning. The dog's eyes opened wearily. It wagged its tail feebly and almost comically.

Lurie remarked, "For the next several hours the dog will show signs of having undergone a serious operation—which it has. In a day or two it'll be as good as new—once the stitches have healed, of course. In Lab Building Two we can show you dozens of dogs that have been through the killing process and were returned to life, happy, hearty—"

"This dog," Raymond said calmly, "is the *son* of a dog we temporarily 'killed' two years ago. The period of death doesn't seem to interfere with later mating or with any other life process."

While they spoke, Vogel was repeating the process of revivification on the dog that had been killed twenty minutes before. This time Harker watched with less revulsion as life returned to the animal.

In a dry voice he said, "Your experiments—are—well, impressive."

Raymond shook his head. "On the contrary. We've merely repeated work that was first carried out more than eighty years ago. These techniques are far from new. But our application of them to—"

"Yes," Harker said weakly. "To *human* life. That's—that's the clincher, I'd say."

Harker realized that Raymond was staring at him coldly, ap-

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praisingly, as if trying to read his mind before proceeding to the next demonstration. Harker felt his face reddening under the scrutiny.

"We're lucky enough to be able to — ah — *clinch* things," Raymond said.

"With a human being?"

Raymond nodded. "You understand that getting human specimens for research has been our gravest problem. I'll have to ask you not to voice any of the questions that may arise in your mind now."

Harker nodded. He could recognize a security blanket when it was lowered.

Raymond turned and said in a mortuary voice, "Bring in Mr. Doe."

Two attendants entered, carrying a sheet-shrouded form on a stretcher. They deposited the figure on the vacant lab table that had held the second dog. Harker saw that it was a man, in his late sixties, bald, dead.

"Mr. Doe has been dead for eleven hours and thirteen minutes," Raymond said. "He died of syncope during an abdominal operation. Would you care to examine the body?"

"I'll accept the evidence on faith, thanks."

"As you will. Dr. Vogel, you can begin."

While Vogel worked over the cadaver, Raymond went on, "The process is essentially compounded out of techniques used for decades with varying success—that is, a combination of pulmotor respiration, artificial heart-massage, hormone-injection, and electrochemical stimulation. The last two are the keys to the process: you can massage a heart for days and keep it pumping blood, but that isn't restoration of life."

"Not unless the heart can continue on its own when you remove the artificial stimulus?"

"Exactly. We've done careful hormone research here, with some of the best men in the nation. A hormone, you know, is a kind of chemical messenger. We've synthesized the hormones that tell the body it's alive. Of course, the electrochemical stimulation is important: the brain's activity is essentially electrical in nature, you know. And so we devised techniques which—"

"Ready, Dr. Raymond."

Harker compelled himself to watch. Needles plunged into the dead man's skin; electrodes fastened to the scalp discharged suddenly. It was weird, vaguely terrifying, laden with burdensome implications for the future. All that seemed missing was the eery blue glow that characterized the evil experiments of stereotyped mad scientists.

He told himself that these men were not mad. He told himself that what they were doing

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was a natural outgrowth of the scientific techniques of the past century, that it was no more terrifying to restore life than it was to preserve it with antibiotics or serums. But he sensed a conflict within himself: he knew that if he accepted this assignment, he could embrace the idea intellectually but that somewhere in the moist jungle-areas of his subconscious mind he would feel disturbed and repelled.

"Watch the needles," Raymond whispered. "Heartbeat's beginning now. Respiration. The electro-encephalograph is recording brain currents again."

"The test, of course, is whether these things continue after your machinery is shut off, isn't it?" Harker asked.

"Of course."

Time edged by. Harker's overstrained attention wandered; he took in the barren peeling walls of the lab, the dingy window through which late-afternoon light streamed. He had heard somewhere that the old-fashioned incandescent bulbs emitted a 60-cycle hum, and he tried unsuccessfully to hear it. Sweat-blotches stippled his shirt.

"Now!" Vogel said. He threw a master lever. The equipment whined faintly and cut off.

The heartbeat recorder and the respiration indicator showed a momentary lapse, then returned to their previous level. The EEG tape continued recording.

Harker's eyes widened slightly. A slow smile appeared on Raymond's face; behind him, Harker could hear Lurie cracking his knuckles nervously, and bespectacled Dr. Klaus tensely grinding his molars together.

"I guess we did it," Vogel said.

The dead man's arms moved slowly. His eyelids fluttered, but the anesthetic insured continued unconsciousness. His lips parted —and the soft groan that came forth was, for Harker, the clincher he had been half-hoping would not be forthcoming.

The man groaned again. Harker felt suddenly weary, and turned his head away.

CHAPTER IV

HARKER'S shock reaction was violent, instinctive, and brief. He quivered uncontrollably, put his hands to his face, and started to lose his balance. Raymond was right there; he caught him, held him upright for a moment, and released him. Harker wobbled and grinned shamefacedly.

"That's strong stuff," he said.

"I've got stronger stuff in my office. Come on."

He and the lab director returned to the adjoining room. Raymond closed the door and clicked it; Lurie and Klaus remained in the lab. Raymond reached into

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his bookcase, pushed a thick black-bound volume to one side, and withdrew a half-empty bottle of Scotch. He poured a double shot for Harker, a single for himself, and replaced the bottle.

"Drink up. Straight."

Harker swallowed the liquor in two frantic gulps. He gasped, grinned again, and shakily set down the glass. "God. I'm roasting in my own sweat."

"It isn't a pleasant sight the first time, I guess. I wish I could share some of your emotional reaction, but I'm blocked out. My dad was a biochemist, specialty life-research. He had me cutting up frogs when I was three. I'm numb to any such reactions by now."

"Don't let that trouble you," Harker said. He shivered. "I could live very happily without seeing another demonstration of your technique, you know."

Raymond chuckled. "Does that mean you're convinced we aren't quacks?"

Harker shrugged. "What you have is heap big medicine. I wonder if I've got the voltage needed to handle the job you want me to do."

"You wouldn't be here if we didn't think so."

"I was fourth on the list," Harker said. "Lurie told me."

"You were my personal choice. I was outvoted. But I knew you'd accept and the other three would turn us down without even coming out here to investigate."

"I haven't said I've accepted," Harker pointed out.

"Well? Do you?"

Harker was silent for a moment, his mind returning to the impact of the scene he had just witnessed. There was still plenty he had to know, of course: the corporate set-up of this lab, including knowledge of the powers that had "outvoted" the director; the financial resources behind him; the possible bugs in the technique.

A dozen implications unfolded. His mind was already at work planning the campaign. He was thinking of people to see, wires to pull, angles to check.

"I guess I accept," he said quietly.

Raymond smiled and reached into his desk. He handed Harker a check drawn on a Manhattan bank for $2,400, payable to James Harker, and signed *Simeon Barchet, Treasurer.*

"What's this?"

"That's four weeks salary, in advance. Barchet's the trustee who administers the Beller Fund. I had him write the check yesterday. I was pretty confident you'd join us, you see."

HARKER SPENT a quietly tense weekend at home with his family. He told Lois about the assignment, of course; he never kept

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things from her, even the most unpleasant. She was dubious, but willing to rely on his judgment.

He worked off some of his physical tension by playing ball in the backyard with his sons. Chris, entering adolescence, was developing an athlete's grace; seven-year-old Paul did not yet have the coordination needed for catching and throwing a baseball, but he gave it a good try.

On Sunday the four of them drove upstate to a picnic ground, ate out, even went for a brief swim though it was really too early in the season for that. Harker splashed and laughed with his sons, but there was an essential somberness about him that Lois quietly pointed out.

"I know," he admitted. "I'm thinking."

"About the Beller Labs business?"

He nodded. "I keep finding new angles in it. I try to guess what the reaction of the organized churches will be, and what political capital will be made. More likely than not the parties will take opposite stands. Somebody will dig up the fact that I used to be a National Liberal bigwig, and that'll enter into the situation. After a while it'll become so confused by side-issues that—" He stopped. "I don't sound very enthusiastic about this job, do I?"

"No," Lois said. "You don't."

"I guess I really haven't made up my mind where I stand," he said. "There are too many tangential things I don't know about yet."

"Like what?"

Harker shook his head. "I'm trying not to think about them. This is my day off, remember?"

ON MONDAY he polished off his routine work early, by half-past-ten, and stepped out of his office. He walked down the beige corridor to the door inscribed WILLIAM F. KELLY and knocked sharply.

"Bill? Me, Jim."

"Come on in, boy."

Kelly was sitting back of an impeccably clear mahogany desk, looking well-barbered, well-manicured, well-fed. He was the senior partner of the law firm that now called itself Kelly, Harker, Portobello, and Klein. In his late fifties, ruddy-faced, quick-witted, Kelly was by religion a loyal Catholic and by politics a determined maverick.

He said, "How's the ex-Governor this morning?"

Harker grinned. Kelly was the one man who could not offend him with those words. "A washed-up has-been, as usual. Bill, I've got a big offer to do some work for a Jersey outfit. I think it's going to tie me up for the next few months. I thought I'd let you know."

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Kelly blinked, then grinned, showing even white teeth. "Full-time?"

"Pretty near."

"How about your pending cases?"

Harker said, "I'm keeping the Bryant case. Fuller and Heidell will have to be handed over to someone else, I'm afraid."

"I guess you know what you're doing, Jim. Who's the big client?"

"Hush-hush. Nice pay, though."

"Can't even tell old Bill, eh? Well, I know better than to pry. But how come you're telling me all this, anyway? I don't give a damn what work you take on, Jim. You're a free agent here."

Calmly Harker said, "I thought I'd let you know because the account's a controversial one. I want you to realize that I'm doing it on my own hook and not as a member of K.H.P. & K. When and if the boomerang comes around and hits me in the face, I don't want you and Mike and Phil to get black eyes too."

Dead seriousness replaced the amiable grin on Kelly's pink face. "Have I ever backed off a hot item, Jim?"

"You might back off this one."

Kelly leaned forward and turned on all his considerable personal charm. "Look here, son, I'm a decade older than you are and a damned sight cagier. Maybe you better talk this thing out with me. If you're free for lunch—"

"I'm not," Harker said doggedly. "Bill, let's drop the whole thing. I know what I'm getting into and I didn't come here for advice. Okay?"

Kelly began to chuckle. "You said the same damn thing the night you were elected Governor. Remember, when you started telling me about how you were going to turn the whole State machine upside-down? I warned you, and I warn you again, but you don't learn. The only thing that got turned upside-down was you."

"So I'm a fool. But at least I'm a *dedicated* fool."

"That's the worst kind," Kelly drawled amiably. As Harker started to leave the older man's office Kelly added, "Good luck, anyway, on whatever you're getting your fool feet tangled up in."

"Thanks, Bill. Sorry I have to be so tight-mouthed."

On his way back to his office he passed the reception-desk; Joan looked up at him and said, "Oh, Mr. Harker—call just came in for you. Mr. Jonathan Bryant's on the phone. He's waiting."

"Switch it into my office," Harker told her. His brows contracted. *Jonathan? What does that particular vulture want?*

Harker cut round the desks in the outer office and let himself

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into his sanctum. He activated the phone. There was the usual three-second circuit-lag, and then the gray haze of electronic "noise" gave way to the fishbelly face of Jonathan Bryant.

"Hello, Harker," he said abruptly. "Just thought I'd call you up to let you know that I've obtained a stay of the hearing on my father's will. It's being pushed up from the 16th to the 23rd."

Harker scowled. "I don't have any official notice of that fact yet."

"It's on its way via court messenger. Just thought I'd let you know about it."

"Go ahead," Harker said. "Gloat all you want, if it gives you pleasure. Your father's will is unbreakable, and you know it damn well. All this stalling—"

"Legal delay," Jonathan corrected.

"All this stalling is just a waste of everybody's time. Sure, I know you're hoping the old man will die before the hearing, but I assure you that can't influence the outcome. If you're that anxious to collect, stop obtaining postponements and just pull the old man's feeding-plugs out. It'll save a lot of heartache for all of us, him included."

"Harker, you lousy politico, you should have been debarred twenty years ago."

"The word you want to use is *disbarred,*" Harker said coldly. "Suppose you get off my line and stop bothering me now? I'd call you a filthy jackal except that I'm too busy for slander suits just now, even suits that I'd win."

Angrily he snapped off contact and the screen blanked. *Nuisance,* he thought, referring both to Jonathan and to the postponement of the hearing. He didn't seriously believe that the Bryant heirs were going to upset the old man's will, and the quicker he got the case off his personal docket the faster he would be free for full-time work on the Beller Labs account.

HE TOOK a doodlepad from his desk and scrawled three names on it:

Winstead.
Thurman.
Msgnr. Carteret.

Leo Winstead was the man who had succeeded him in the Governor's mansion in Albany—a steady, reliable National Liberal party-line man, flexible and open in his views but loyal to the good old machine. He would be one of the first men Harker would have to see; Winstead would give him the probable Nat-Lib party line on the resurrection gimmick, and he could be trusted to keep things to himself until given the official release.

Clyde Thurman was New York's senior Senator, a formida-

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ble old ogre of a man with incalculable influence in Washington. Harker had been a Thurman protege, fifteen years ago; publicly old Clyde had soured on Harker since his futile attempt at political independence, but Harker had no idea where the old man stood privately. If he could win Thurman over to his side, Senate approval of revivification legislation was a good bet. The Nat-Libs controlled 53 seats in the 123rd Congress; the American-Conservatives held only 45, with the other two seats held down by self-proclaimed Independents. In the House, it was even better: 297 to 223, with 20 Independents of variable predictability.

Harker's third key man was Monseigneur Carteret. The Father was a highly-respected member of New York's Catholic hierarchy, shrewd and liberal in his beliefs, and already (at the age of 38) considered a likely candidate for an Archepiscopacy and beyond that the red hat.

Harker had met Father Carteret through Kelly. While he was no Catholic himself, nor currently a member of any other organized group, Harker had struck up a close friendship with the priest. He could rely on Carteret to give him an accurate and confidential appraisal of the possible Church reaction to announcement of a successful technique for resuscitating the dead.

Harker ripped the sheet off the doodlepad and pocketed it. He hung poised over his desk, deep in thought, his active mind already picturing the interviews he might be having with these people.

After a moment he reached for his phone and punched out the coordinates of Father Carteret's private number. Might as well begin with him, Harker thought.

A pleasantly monkish face appeared on the screen after several rings. "Yes? May I help you?"

"I'd like to speak to Father Carteret, please. My name is James Harker."

"Pardon, Mr. Harker. Father Carteret is in conference with Bishop O'Loughlin. Would you care to have him call you when he's free?"

"When will that be?"

"A half hour, I'd say. Is your matter urgent?"

"Reasonably. Tell the Monseigneur I'd like to make an appointment to see him some time today or tomorrow, and ask him to call me at my office."

"Does he have your number?"

"I think so. But you'd better take it anyway, just to make sure. MON-4-38162."

He blanked the screen, waited a moment, and dialed the number Raymond had given him to use when calling the laboratory. The pale, goggle-eyed face of

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David Klaus appeared on the screen.

"I'd like to talk to Raymond."

"Dr. Raymond's busy in the hormone lab," Klaus said sharply. "Try again in an hour or so."

Harker frowned impatiently; he had taken an immediate dislike to this jittery little enzyme researcher. He said, "You tell Raymond—"

"Just a minute," a new voice said. There was confusion on the screen for an instant; then Klaus' face disappeared and the precise, tranquil features of Martin Raymond took their place.

"I thought you were busy in the hormone lab," Harker said. "Klaus told me so."

Raymond laughed without much humor behind it. "Klaus is frequently inaccurate, Mr. Harker. What's on your mind?"

"Thought I'd let you know that I'm getting down to immediate operation. I'm lining up interviews with key people for today and tomorrow as a preliminary investigation of your legal situation."

"Good. By the way—Mitchison's prepared some publicity handouts on the process. He wants you to okay them before we send them to the papers."

Harker repressed a strangled cough. "Okay them? Listen, Mart, that's exactly why I called. My first official instruction is that the present wrap of ultra-security is to continue unabated until I'm ready to lift it. Tell that to Mitchison and tell him in spades."

Raymond smiled evenly. "Of course—Jim. All secrecy wraps on until you give the word. I'll let Mitchison know."

"Good. I'll be out at the lab sometime between here and Wednesday to find out some further information. I'll keep in touch whenever I can."

"Right."

Harker broke contact and stared puzzledly at the tips of his fingers for a moment. His uneasiness widened. His original suspicion that behind the smooth facade of the Beller Research Laboratories lay possible dissension was heightened by Klaus' peculiar behavior on the phone —and the idea of Mitchison doing anything as premature as sending out press handouts now, before the ground had been surveyed and the ice broken, gave him the cold running shudders.

It was going to be enough of a job putting this thing across as it was—without tripping over the outstretched toes of his employers.

CHAPTER V

MONSEIGNEUR CARTERET'S private office reminded Harker of Mart Raymond's. Like Raymond's, it was small, and

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like Raymond's it was ringed with jammed bookshelves. The furniture was unostentatious, old and well-worn. As a concession to the 21st century Carteret had installed a video pickup and a telescreen attachment to go with his phone. A small crucifix hung on the one wall not encumbered with books.

Carteret leaned forward and peered curiously at Harker. The priest, Harker knew, suffered from presbyopia. He was a lean man with the sharp facial contours of an ascetic: upthrust cheekbones, lowering brows, grizzled close-cropped hair turning gray. His lips were fleshless, pale.

Harker said, "I have to apologize for insisting on such a prompt audience, Father."

Carteret frowned reprovingly. "You told me yesterday it was an urgent matter. To me urgency means—well, *urgency*. My column for the *Intelligencer* can wait a few hours, I guess."

His voice was dramatically resonant. He flashed his famous smile.

Harker said, "Fair enough. I'm here seeking an ecclesiastical opinion."

"I'll do my best. You understand that any *real* opinion on a serious matter would have to come from the Bishop, not from me—and ultimately from Rome."

"I know that. I wouldn't want this to get to Rome just yet. I want a private, off-the-record statement from you."

"I'll try. Go ahead."

Harker took a deep breath. "Father, what's the official Church position on resurrection of the dead? Actual physical resurrection here and now, I mean, not the Last Trump."

Carteret's eyes twinkled. "Officially? Well, I've never heard Jesus being condemned for raising Lazarus. And on the third day after the crucifixion Jesus Himself was raised, if that's what you mean. I don't see—"

"Let me make myself clear," Harker said. "The resurrections of Jesus and of Lazarus both fall into the miracle category. Suppose—suppose a mortal being, a doctor, could take a man who had been dead eight or nine hours, or even a day, and bring him back to life."

Carteret looked momentarily troubled. "You speak hypothetically, of course." When Harker did not answer he went on, "Our doctrine holds that death occurs at the moment of 'complete and definitive separation of body and soul.' Presumably the process you discuss makes no provision for restoring the soul."

Harker shrugged. "I'm not capable to judge that. Neither, I'd say, are the men who have developed this—ah—hypothetical process."

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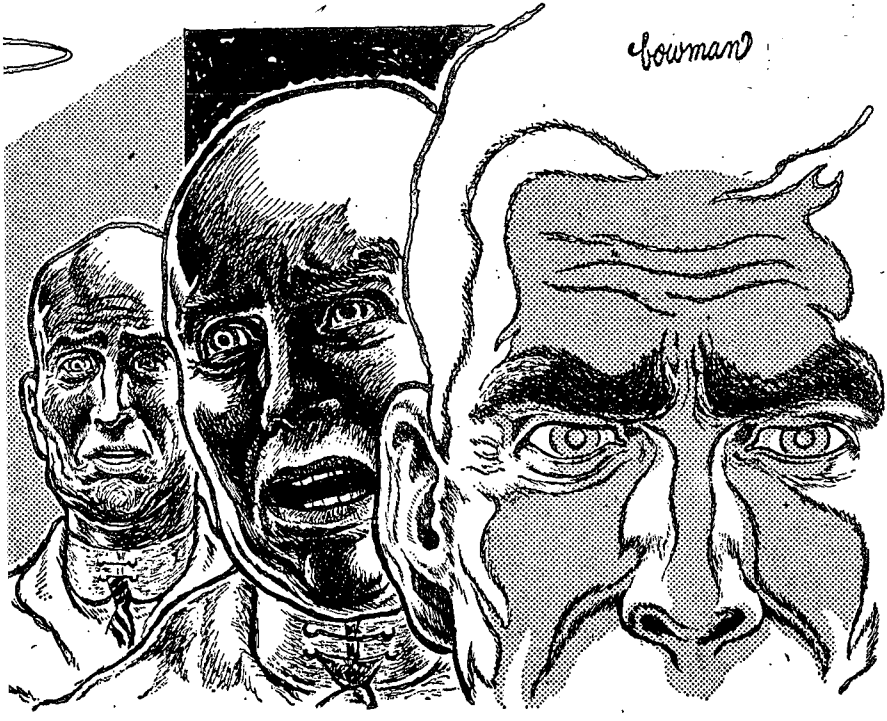
"In that case," Carteret said, "the official Church position would be that any human beings revived by this method would be without souls, and therefore no longer human. The whole procedure would be considered profoundly irreligious."

"Blasphemous and sacrilegious as well?"

"No doubt."

Harker was silent for a moment. He said at length, "How about artificial respiration, heart massage, adrenalin injections? For decades seemingly dead people have been brought back to life with these techniques. Are *they* all without souls too?"

Carteret seemed to squirm. His strong fingers toyed with a cruciform paperweight on his desk. "I recall a statement of Pius XII, eighty or ninety years ago, about that. The Pope admitted that it was impossible to tell precisely when the soul had left the body —and that so long as the vital functions maintained themselves, it could be held that the person



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in question was not dead."

"In other words, if resuscitation techniques could be applied successfully, the patient is considered never to have been dead?"

Carteret nodded slowly.

"But if the patient had been pronounced dead by science and left in that state for half a day or more, and *then* reanimated by a hypothetical new technique—?"

"In that case there has been a definite discontinuity of the life-process," Carteret said. "I may be wrong, but I can't see how the Vatican could give such a technique its approval."

"Ever?"

Carteret smiled. "Jim, it's a verity that the Church is founded on a Rock, but that doesn't mean our heads are made of stone. No organization lasts two thousand years without being susceptible to change. If in the course of time we're shown that a reanimation technique restores both body *and* soul, no doubt we'll give it approval. At present, though, I can foresee only one outcome."

Harker knotted his fingers together tensely. The priest's response had not been a surprise to him, but he had hoped for some wild loophole. If any loophole existed, Carteret would have found it.

Quietly he said, "All right, Father. I'll put my cards on the table now. Such a process *has* been invented. I've seen it work. I've been retained as legal adviser for the group that developed it, and I'm shopping around for religious and secular opinions before I let them spring the news on the public."

"You want my secular opinion, Jim, now that you've had the religious one?"

"Of course."

"Drop it. Get out of this thing as fast as you can. You're asking for trouble."

"I know that. But I can only see this process as a force for good—for minimizing tragedy in everyday life."

"Naturally. And I could offer you six arguments showing how it'll *increase* suffering. Is it a complex technique requiring skilled operators?"

"Yes, but—"

"In that case it won't be available to everybody right away. Are *you* going to decide who lives and who stays dead? Suppose you're faced with the choice between a good and virtuous nobody or an evil but talented creative artist."

"I know. *The Doctor's Dilemma.* I don't have any slick answers to that, Father. But I still don't think it's any reason to suppress this thing."

"Maybe not. On a purely secular level, though, I tell you it's sheer dynamite. Not to mention the opposition you're bound to get from religious groups. Jim, listen to me: you had a

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wonderful career once. You wrecked it. But now you're continuing your headstrong ways right to the point of self-destruction."

"Which is frowned upon by your Church," Harker snapped, irritated. "But—"

"I'm not talking about my Church!" Carteret thundered. "I'm talking about you, your family, the rest of your life. You're getting into very deep waters."

"I'll shoulder the responsibility myself."

"I wish you could," the priest murmured. "I wish any of us could. But we can't ever do that, of course."

He shrugged. "Go in peace, Jim. Any time you want to talk to me, just pick up the phone and call. I guarantee no proselytizing."

"Of course everything we've just said is confidential, you understand."

Carteret nodded. He lifted his arms, shaking the sleeves of his cassock back. "Observe. No concealed tape-recorders under my garments. No telespies in the wall."

Chuckling, Harker opened the door and stood at the threshold a moment. "Thanks for talking to me, Father. Even if I can't agree with you."

"I'm used to disagreement," Carteret said. "If everyone who came in here agreed with everything I said, I think I'd lose my faith. So long, Jim."

"Good-bye, Father."

HARKER EMERGED on the steps of the old cathedral where Carteret had his office, paused for a few deep breaths, and looked around. Fifth Avenue was humming with activity, here at noontime on a Tuesday in mid-month.

He thought: *Tuesday, May 14, 2033. A pleasant late-spring day. And any time I decide to give the word, the entire nature of human philosophy will change.*

Harker walked downtown to 43rd Street, stopped in for a quick coffee, and headed toward the Monorail Terminal. Puffing businessmen clutching attache cases sped past him, each on some business of no-doubt-vital importance, each blithely shortening his life-span with each new ulcer and each new deposit of cholesterol in the arteries. Well, before long it would be possible to bring these fat executives back to life each time they keeled over, Harker thought. What a frantic speedup would result *then!*

He bought a round-trip ticket to Litchfield, put through a call to the laboratory, and boarded the slim graceful yellow-hulled bullet that was the New Jersey monobus. He sat back, cushioning himself against the first jolt of acceleration, and waited for departure.

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The eleventh commandment: *Thou need not die.* Harker shivered a little at the magnitude of the Beller project; each day he realized a little more deeply the true awesome nature of the whole breakthrough.

Mitchison was waiting for him at the Litchfield monobus depot in the big black limousine. Harker climbed in, sitting next to the public-relations man on the front seat.

"Well?" Mitchison jammed his cigar into one corner of his mouth. "What did the padre have to say?"

"Precisely what we all expected."

"Nix?"

"Double-double nix with molasses and cherries on top," Harker said. "His unofficial feeling is that the Church will ixnay this thing the second it's announced."

"Umm. Take some heavy thinking to cancel *that* out. How about the politicos?"

The car pulled into the Beller Labs' private road. Harker said, "I'm going to Albany later in the week to see Governor Winstead. After him I'll go after Senator Thurman. Depending on what they say—"

"The hell with that," Mitchison growled. "When do you figure we can release this thing to the public?"

Harker turned round in his seat. In a level voice he said, "When you're planning to touch off a fusion bomb, you look around first and make sure you won't get scragged yourself. Same here. This project's been kept under wraps for eight years, and I'm damned if I'll release anything now until I see exactly where we all stand."

"And you'll pussyfoot around for months?"

"What do you care?" Harker demanded. "Are you getting paid by the week or by the amount of publicity you send out?"

Mitchison grunted something but made no intelligible answer. They pulled up at the road-block and Harker got out at the right; the guards nodded curtly to him this time but made no attempt to interfere as he headed toward the administration building. Mitchison took his car to the parking-area.

Knocking at Raymond's door, Harker said, "You there, Mart?"

The door opened. A diminutive hatchet-faced man peered up at him. "Hello, Harker."

Taken off balance, Harker blinked a moment, then said, "Hello. I don't think we've met, have we?"

"You've seen my name. At the bottom of your check. I'm Barchet. Administrator of the Beller Fund."

Harker smiled at the little man and looked past him to Raymond. He shook his head. "It's no go,

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Mart. The Father says the Church will oppose us."

Raymond shrugged. "We could have figured on that, I guess. What's the next step?"

Harker nodded. "I see Winstead on Friday. I hope for better luck there."

"Doubtful," Barchet snorted. His voice was an annoying saw-edged whine. Harker wondered whether the little man was going to be around the Litchfield labs very often; he had a deep dislike for moneymen.

Ignoring Barchet's comment, Harker said to Raymond, "Mart, how solid is the tenure of the people in this organization?"

"What do you mean?"

"Do all the affiliated men have verbal contracts like me, or are some inked in black-and-white?"

"Most of the research men have verbal agreements."

"How about Mitchison?"

Barchet turned to peer at Harker. Raymond frowned and said, "Why Mitchison?"

"I'll be blunt," Harker said. "I'd like to bounce him. He does not seem very capable and he's awfully trigger-happy about releasing data on the project. If it's okay with you, I'd like to bring in a couple of the boys who handled my gubernatorial campaign. They—"

Interrupting icily, Barchet said, "It seems to me we have more than enough people of radical political affiliation working for us now. Anyone who handled a Nat-Lib campaign would be no asset to our work."

Harker goggled. "*I* was a Nat-Lib Governor! You hired me, and you think that two press-agents—"

"I might as well tell you," Barchet said. "You were hired over my positive objections, Mr. Harker. Your party happens to be the one in power, but it definitely does not represent the main ideological current of American enterprise. And if we succeed in our aims, I like to think it will be *despite* your presence on our team, not because of it."

"Huh? Who the hell—"

"Wait a minute, Jim," Raymond cut in. "And you too, Simeon. I don't want any fighting in here!"

"I'm simply stating views that I expound regularly at our meetings," Barchet said. "For your information, Mr. Harker, Cal Mitchison is the best publicity agent money can buy. I will not consent to his dismissal."

"You may have to consent to my resignation, then," Harker said angrily. "Dammit, Mart, if I knew this outfit was run by—"

"Watch yourself, Mr. Harker," Barchet warned.

"Calm down, Jim." Raymond disengaged himself from his desk and, glowering down at Barchet, said, "Simeon, you know damned

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well Harker was approved by a majority of the shareholders. You have no business raising a squabble like this now. He was hired and given free rein—and if he wants to fire Mitchison, it's within his province."

"I insist on bringing the matter before the Board—and if Mitchison is dismissed without full vote, I'll cause trouble. Good day, Dr. Raymond."

The little man sailed past Harker without a word and slammed the door. Harker grinned and said, "What was *he* so upset about?"

Raymond slumped wearily behind his desk. "Barchet's the official voice of old Beller in this outfit—and Beller was as conservative as they come. Barchet thinks you're an arch-radical because you held office for the Nat-Libs. And the little bugger carries a lot of weight on the Board, so we have to humor him."

Harker nodded. He understood now what Raymond had meant when he said he had been "outvoted" in the matter of hiring Harker as first choice. It did not increase his opinion of Beller Research Laboratories.

"I wouldn't blame you if you quit today," Raymond said suddenly. "With Mitchison on pins and needles to give the word to the public, and that idiot Klaus battling for my job because he's tired of enzyme work—"

"Klaus? But he's just a kid!"

"He's twenty-nine, and for an ex-prodigy that's ancient. Degree from Harvard at fifteen, that sort of thing. I have to keep close watch on him or he'll put a scalpel in my back."

"Why not fire him?" Harker suggested.

"Two reasons. He's got a contract, for one—and for another I'd rather have him with us than agin us, if you know what I mean. Lesser of two evils."

Raymond sighed. "Great little place we have here, Jim. Sometimes I feel like closing the windows and turning up the gas." He shook his head reflectively. "But it wouldn't work. Some bastard would drag me next door and bring me back to life again."

He reached into the bookshelf and produced the liquor bottle. "One quick shot apiece," he said. "Then I want to take you round back to show you the rest of the lab."

CHAPTER VI

THE GRAND TOUR of the laboratory grounds was as disturbing as it was stimulating. Seemingly tireless, Raymond marched him through room after room where elaborate experiments were going on.

"Serotonin-diffraction goes on in here. This room's plasma research; remind me to bring you

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back some time when the big centrifuge is running. Fascinating. This is Klaus' enzyme lab, and down here—"

Harker puffed along behind the lab director, listening to the flow of unfamiliar terms, dazzled by the array of formidable scientific devices. He saw kennels where lively dogs bounded joyfully up and down and struggled to lick his hands through the cage; it was a little jarring to learn that every dog in the room had been "dead" at least once, for periods ranging from a few minutes to twenty-eight hours. He met a grave little rhesus monkey that held the record; it had been dead thirty-nine hours, two months before.

"We had a pair of them," Raymond said. "We brought this fellow back at the 39-hour mark, and held the other off for nine more hours in hopes of hitting a full two days. We didn't make it. The surviving monk moped for days about it."

Harker nodded. He was swept on; into a large room lined with ledgers, which Raymond said contained all the records of the Beller Laboratories since its opening in 2024. White-smocked researchers turned to look up as Harker and his guide passed through into a long, well-lit lab room, then out into the afternoon warmth and across to the other building, for more of the same.

"Well," Harker said finally, after they had returned to Raymond's office. "It's a busy place."

Raymond nodded. "We keep it moving. And it gets results. Despite everything, it gets results."

Despite everything. Harker didn't like the implications of that. He was beginning to form a picture of Raymond as an able man surrounded by stumbling-blocks and obstacles, and bulling his way through none the less. He wondered how it would be once he got the campaign into full swing, not too many weeks from now.

Harker leaned back, trying to relax. Raymond said, "Is it too early for you to give me an outline of the program you're planning?"

Harker hunched his shoulders forward uneasily. "It's still in the formative stage. I'm seeing Governor Winstead on Friday, as you know, and early next week I'll go down to Washington and talk to Senator Thurman. If we get them on our side, the rest is relatively easy."

"And if we don't?"

Harker did not smile. "Then we have a fight."

"Why do you say that? Can't we just set up an instruction center and start resuscitating?"

"Pardon me, Mart, if I say that your approach's a naive one. We *can't* do any such thing. Not even

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if you limit use of the apparatus to fully qualified M.D.'s. You see, anything as radical as this will have to be routed through the Federal Health Department, and they'll simply boot it on up to the President, and he'll refer it to Congress. What we need is a law making use of your technique legal."

"Is there any law saying it's *illegal* to reanimate the dead?" Raymond asked.

"Not yet. But you can bet there'll be an attempt to ram one through, before long. Which is why we have to put through a law of our own."

Raymond fell silent; his blue-cheeked face looked grave. An idea occurred to Harker and he said, "Do you have any idea how big our public-relations budget is?"

Raymond shrugged. "Pretty big. I guess you can have three or four hundred thousand, if you need it."

"Three or four hundred *million* is more in line with what we'll need," Harker said. He saw the stunned expression on Raymond's face and added, "Certainly at least a million, to begin with."

"But why? Why should it be necessary to *sell* the idea of restoring life? You'd think the people of America would rise up and acclaim us as saviors."

"You'd think so, wouldn't you?" Harker shook his head bleakly. "It doesn't work that way, Mart. For one thing, they'll be afraid to try it. There'll be plenty of 'zombie' jokes, and behind those jokes will be unvoiced fear. Uh-uh, Mart. If we're going to put this thing across, we'll need a big public-relations budget. And we can't let a bubble-head like Mitchison handle the job."

"It'll take a little time to fire him."

"Why?"

"You heard Barchet. Mitchison's Barchet's man. We'll have to go through shareholder channels to get rid of Mitchison."

"How long will that take?"

"Two weeks, maybe three," Raymond said. "Will that hold things up too badly?"

"We'll manage," Harker said tiredly.

HARKER SPENT the next morning, Wednesday, at his office, tidying up unfinished business. The delayer on the Bryant hearing had come through, and he read the document carefully, scowled, and jammed it into his desk drawer. He phoned the Bryant home and learned that the old man was very low; the penguinoid doctor refused to let Harker speak with him. Harker suspected the fine hand of Jonathan Bryant lurking behind that ukase, but there wasn't much he could

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do about it. The old man wasn't going to last forever, anyway—but Harker genuinely wanted him to hold out until after the hearing, at least.

Nasty business. Jonathan had deliberately obtained the stay of hearing in hopes that his father would die before the case came up.

He left the office at noon, spent some time downtown in the public library trying to find some books that would give him a little scientific background, and headed for home about four that afternoon. His home life had been suffering, a bit, in the week since he had plunged himself fully into the Beller Labs project. He had been coming home at odd hours, which upset Lois' routine, and his attitude was one of withdrawn introversion, which made things tough on the children. Still, they all were very cooperative about it, Harker thought. He hoped he could make it up to them when the pressure let up.

If the pressure ever let up.

Thursday passed slowly. Harker remained at home, in his study, and tried to read the books he had brought from the library. He was surprised to learn that formal resuscitation research dated from the middle years of the past century. He traced down a few of the terms Raymond had thrown at him, and learned a bit about the mechanics of the Beller reanimation technique.

But, he realized when he put the books down, he knew very little in detail. He had simply skimmed the surface, acquiring a veneer of terms which he could use to impress the even-less-educated.

A politician's trick, he thought. But what else could he do?

He woke early on Friday, before six, and made breakfast for himself. By the time he had turned off the autocook and set the kitchen-servo to *mop-up,* Lois and the children were moving about upstairs. They had come down for breakfast before he was ready to leave.

"Morning, Dad," Chris said. "Up early, eh?"

"I have to make a 9:30 jet," he explained. "It's the last one before noon."

Paul appeared, thumbing his eyes, yawning. "Where you going, Daddy?"

"Albany," Harker said.

The seven-year-old looked awake immediately. "Albany? Are you Governor again, Daddy?"

"*Hush,* stupid!" Chris said savagely.

But Harker merely smiled and shook his head. "No, I won't be Governor any more, Paul. I'm going to visit Mr. Winstead. *He's* the Governor now."

"Oh," the boy said gravely.

Harker reached the West Side

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jet terminal at ten after nine. The big 150-seater was out on the field, surrounded by attendants. It would make the trip to Albany in just under thirteen minutes.

It was a silly business. It took him twice that long to get to the terminal from his home. But modern transportation was full of such paradoxes.

At nine-thirty-five the great ship erupted from the landing-strip; not much later it was roaring over Westchester, and not very much after that it was taxiing to a smooth and uneventful landing just outside Albany.

Thirteen minutes. And it took twenty-five minutes more for the jetport bus to bring them across the Hudson into Albany proper after the flight.

His appointment with Governor Winstead was for eleven that morning. Declining the public transport service, Harker walked through town to the governor's mansion—a walk that he had come to know well, in his four years in Albany.

The town hadn't changed much. Still third-rate, dirty, bedraggled; one of his proposed reforms had been to move the Capital downstate to New York City, where it really belonged, but naturally the force of sentiment was solidly against him, not to mention the American-Conservative Party, whose New York stronghold Albany was.

He smiled at the memory. He had fought so many losing battles, in his four years as Governor.

THE GUARDS at Winstead's mansion recognized him, of course, and tipped their hats. Harker grinned amiably at them and passed through, but he felt inward discomfort. *Their* jobs were pegged down by civil-service regulations; his had not been, and he had lost it. In an odd way it made him feel inferior.

He traveled the familiar journey upstairs to the Governor's office. Winstead was there to greet him with outstretched hand and a faintly abashed smile.

"Jim. So glad you could come up here."

"It's not a courtesy call, Leo. I'm here to ask some advice."

"Any way I can help, Jim, you know I will."

Harker experienced a moment of disorientation as he took a seat facing Wisntead across the big desk that had been his until a few months ago. It was strange to find himself sitting on *this* side of the desk.

He looked for ways to begin saying what he had come here to say. He sensed the other man's deep embarrassment, and shared it in a way, because the awkwardness of this first meeting between Governor and ex-Governor was complex and many-leveled.

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Winstead was ten years his senior: a good party man, a reliable workhorse who had come up through the ranks of the Manhattan District Attorney's office, and who had turned down a judgeship because he thought he had a shot at the race for Governor. But the party had chosen the bright, meteorically-rising young Mayor, James Harker, to be the standard-bearer instead, and an avalanche of Nat-Lib votes from downstate had swept Harker in.

Then it had been necessary to discard Harker four years later, and good dependable old Leo Winstead was trotted out of private law practice to take his place. The Nat-Lib tide held true; Winstead was elected, and now it was the ex-prodigy who entered private law practice instead of using the Governorship as a springboard into the White House.

Harker said, "Leo, you carry weight with the party. I don't any more."

"Jim, I—"

"Don't try to apologize, Leo, because it's my own fault and none of yours that I'm where I am now. I'm simply asking you to exert some influence on behalf of a project I'm involved in."

It was a naked attempt at lobbying. Harker hoped Winstead's unconscious guilt-feelings would lead him to support the Beller people.

"What sort of project is it, Jim?"

"It's—it's a sort of revolutionary breakthrough in science, Leo. A process to reanimate people who have been dead less than twenty-four hours."

Winstead sat up. "Are you serious?"

"Dead serious. I'm going down to Washington next week to see Thurman. This thing really *works* —and I want to get it legally approved."

"And exactly where do I come in?"

"You're a powerful official, Leo. If you came out in praise of this new development—"

"Dangerous business, Jim. The Church—"

"I know all about the Church. And you can bet our friends the American-Conservatives will make some kind of political capital about the news. The Nat-Libs will *have* to take a favorable stand on this."

"Suppose we don't?" Winstead asked. His voice was tense and off-center; he ran his knotty hands nervously through his bushy shock of white hair. "You know as well as I do that this is no time to hop off supporting anything too far-fetched."

Harker began to feel a sense of exasperation. "Far-fetched? Leo, I saw a dead man come back to life right in front of me. If you think—"

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"I don't think anything. Thinking's not my job. If you'll pardon my saying so, Jim, you did too much thinking for your own good when you were in Albany. This thing has to be handled with kid gloves. It would not surprise me if the government clamps down and bottles it all up until all its aspects have been fully explored."

"Federal Research Act of '92," Harker said thinly. "It guarantees freedom of research without government interference, as you know well enough."

Winstead seemed to be perspiring heavily. "Laws can be repealed or amended, Jim. Listen here: why don't you go see Thurman? Find out how *he* stands on the matter. Then come back here and maybe we can talk about it again."

It was obviously a dismissal. Winstead had no intentions of getting involved with something that had so many ramifications as this.

Tiredly Harker rose. "Okay. I'll see Thurman."

"Good."

"One more thing, Leo—this project hasn't been announced to the public yet. Since you're aware of the fuss it's going to kick up, I hope you'll be thoughtful enough to keep your mouth shut until we're ready to spring it ourselves."

"Of course, Jim. Of course."

CHAPTER VII

IT WAS a very long weekend.

Harker reached his home at five-thirty that evening, having left Winstead around noon. He had had a miserable chlorella-steak lunch on the wrong side of State Street and spent the early afternoon strolling around Albany, easing the inner tension that gripped him. He made the 4:15 jet back to New York.

Chris was watching the video when he came in; it was a weekend, and the boy had no homework. He hopped up immediately and said, "Drink, Dad?"

"Martini. *Very* dry."

The boy busied himself with the pushbutton controls of the autobar while Harker hung up his hat and jacket. Lois appeared from the general vicinity of the kitchen.

"Did you see Winstead?"

He nodded. "Yeah, I saw him. He obviously doesn't want any part of the project."

"Oh. Dr. Raymond called, from the labs. He wanted to know if you were back yet. I told him you'd call as soon as you came home."

Harker picked up the phone, yanked down on the long-distance switch, and punched out Raymond's number. He waited, hoping Raymond himself would pick up and not Klaus or Barchet or someone like that.

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Raymond did. He looked inquisitively out of the screen and Harker told him exactly what Winstead had said. When he had finished the flat, weary recital, he added, "I'm going to Washington on Monday. But if Thurman gives me the brush-off, we may be in trouble."

Raymond grinned with unconvincing heartiness. "We'll get through somehow, Jim. Have faith."

"I sincerely wish I could," Harker said.

He sipped the drink Chris put in his hand, and after a little of the cold gin had filtered into his bloodstream he felt better. It was a false comfort, he knew, but it was comfort all the same. He went upstairs to the sitting-room, picked out a musictape almost at random, put it on. The selection was a mistake: Handel's *Messiah,* Part III. He listened to the big alto aria that opened the section:

. . . I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

For now is Christ risen from the dead. . . .

After the final notes of the aria had died away came the chorus, slow, grave:

. . . Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. . . .

The jubilant tones of *"Even so in Christ"* sent startling shivers of illumination through him; it was as if he had never listened to these words before. (*"Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. . . ."*) The words pursued him everywhere.

Twenty minutes later, after the last melisma of *"Amen,"* he abruptly turned the set off; dinner was about ready, or at least it should be. It was. He ate quietly, deep in thought.

On Saturday he was a little more lively; he worked around the house, took Chris and Paul for an hour-long hike in the early afternoon, spent some time before dinner watching the telecast of the Yankee-Dodger interleague game from Los Angeles. He and Lois visited neighbors in the evening; it was a pleasant, relaxed three or four hours. He was beginning to think he could forget about the problem that was starting to grow.

But Sunday his short-lived forgetfulness ended. It was breakfast-time; Paul was struggling under the bulk of the Sunday *Times,* which had been left in

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the box outside, and Lois was bringing the pancakes to the table. As he took the paper from his youngest son, Harker turned to Chris and said, "Switch on the audio. Let's see what the morning news is like."

There was a click. A resonant, almost cavernous voice said:

". . . he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I—"

Impatiently Chris reached out and changed the station. Harker shook his head, annoyed. "No, Chris. Get that back. I want to hear it."

"The *Bible,* Dad?"

Harker nodded impatiently. As Chris searched for the original station Lois said, "That's St. Matthew, isn't it?"

Chuckling, Harker said, "St. John, unless I've forgotten all my Sunday Schooling. Your father ought to hear you say a thing like that."

Lois' father had been a stern Bible-reading Presbyterian; he had never approved of Harker. The radio preacher said:

". . . Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said unto them—"

"All right," Harker broke in suddenly. "You can change the station now."

Chris said, "How come you wanted to hear that, Dad?"

"It's a very famous passage." Harker smiled. "And I have a feeling we're all going to get to know it pretty well before summer comes."

AFTER SUPPER Sunday he packed for his trip to Washington; he took an extra change of clothes, because Thurman's secretary had warned him that the Senator was very busy and might not be able to see him until Tuesday. Harker reflected privately that that was fine treatment to accord a man who had once been virtually the titular head of the party, but complaining would

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have done him less than no good.

He came downstairs again after packing, and spent the next several hours watching video with the family: a silly, mindless series of programs, ideally designed to give the mind a rest.

At quarter-past-nine, in the middle of an alleged ballet sequence, the screen went blank. Harker frowned, annoyed; then an announcer's face appeared.

"We interrupt this program to bring you a special announcement from our newsroom.

"Richard Bryant, hero of Earth's first successful voyage to another planet, died quietly in his sleep an hour ago, in his Manhattan apartment. He would have been seventy-four next month.

"He was assured of immortality on the first of August, 1984, when he radioed from Mars the triumphant message, 'Have landed *Mars One* safely. Am on way back. Mars is pretty dreary.' *From that day on, Rick Bryant was a hero to billions.*

"We return you now to the regularly-scheduled program."

Cavorting dancers returned to the screen. In a soft, barely-audible voice, Harker cursed eloquently.

"Gee, Dad! Rick Bryant died!" Chris exclaimed.

Not long after he had taken the case, Harker had induced the old man to autograph a copy of his book *I Flew to Mars* for Chris; since then, the boy had taken deep interest in Bryant's career.

Harker nodded. To Lois he said, "They didn't even give him a chance. The hearing would have been last Thursday, but his son got it postponed."

"Do you think this will affect the outcome, Jim?"

"I doubt it. That document was pretty solid. Damn, I wanted old Bryant to have the satisfaction of knowing he died on top." Broodingly he stared at his slippers. "If any of them had any guts, they would have lied to him, told him his will was upheld. But of course they didn't. They're just so many vultures. Hell, I guess I'd better phone. As the old man's lawyer, I'd better get in touch."

He went upstairs to his den and switched on the phone. Punching out the Bryant number, he waited a moment; an intercepting service took the call and said, "We represent the Bryant family. Only friends of the family and immediate relatives can be put through just now, sir."

"I'm the late Mr. Bryant's lawyer," Harker said, staring at the monogrammed pattern on the screen. "James Harker. Will you put me through?"

There was a momentary pause; then: "I beg your pardon, sir.

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Your name does not seem to be on the list. You understand that in a time of grief such as this the Bryant family accepts your condolences in the sincere spirit in which they are offered, and regrets that it cannot devote personal time to you as yet. We suggest that you call back tomorrow, when the shock of Mr. Bryant's departure has lessened."

The intercepting-service monogram disappeared from the screen. Harker scowled.

The cold-blooded lice. Hiring a service to dish out all that unctuous crap, meanwhile making sure I don't have a chance to talk to anybody there.

He took a deep breath and punched out another number: the home phone of District Judge Auerbach, who was scheduled to conduct the Bryant hearing next Thursday.

Auerbach appeared on the screen, plump, sleepy-looking. Harker said, "Sorry to disturb you on a Sunday night, Tom. You've heard about the Bryant business?"

Auerbach nodded. "Too bad, I guess. He was very sick."

"No doubt of that. Look, Tom, his sons are being sticky about their phone. I'm on the spit-list and can't get through to them. Has Jonathan phoned you tonight?"

"No. Is he supposed to?"

"I don't know. I just want to notify you that I'll be out of town on business tomorrow and maybe Tuesday, in case you or he or anybody is trying to reach me. But I'll be back in plenty of time for the hearing on Thursday. There isn't another motion for a postponement, is there?"

"Not that I know of," Auerbach said. "Be seeing you in court on Thursday, then?"

"Right."

He returned to the television room. The ballet was still going on.

"Well?" Lois asked.

"I couldn't reach the Bryants. They hired an intercepting service," Harker said darkly. "I spoke to Tom Auerbach, though. The hearing's still scheduled for Thursday. Jonathan just didn't want the old man to be alive when it was held."

I wouldn't put it past them to murder old Bryant, he thought. *Cold-blooded bunch.*

He stared at the screen, but the colorful images only irritated him.

IDLEWILD was a busy place the following morning. Harker got there at half-past-nine, and the sprawling buildings were jam-packed.

"Flight 906 leaving for London via TWA in fifteen minutes— Flight 906 leaving for London via TWA in fifteen minutes—"

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He heard a deep-bellied boom; someone next to him said, "That's a cross-country job, I'll bet."

Sure enough, the loudspeaker said, *"Now departing, Flight 136 for San Francisco—"*

Above him a neon board flashed. The bright letters said: *Flight 136. Lv Idlwld 0932, Ar SF 1126.*

Less than two hours across the continent. Harker shivered; the plane that had taken off two minutes ago was probably somewhere over Pennsylvania or Ohio by now.

"Attention, please. Flight 199, United Air Lines, for Washington, D. C., departure 0953, now boarding—"

That was his plane. Leaving in about twenty minutes, and arriving in Washington only about twenty minutes after that. Harker looked up and saw a great golden stratocruiser coming in for a landing on a distant runway. All around him he felt the nervous urgency always surrounding people traveling.

Inwardly he began to grow tense. He had checked off two of the three names on his scrawled list; neither had been of much encouragement. Only Senator Clyde Thurman remained, and Thurman represented the old-guard conservative wing of the Nat-Lib party; there was no telling how he would react to the news that a technique had been developed for—

"Attention, please. Telephone call for Mr. James Harker. Mr. James Harker, please report to any ticket desk. Telephone call for James Harker—"

Puzzled, Harker shoved his way through the crowd to the desk in the foreground and said to the uniformed clerk, "I'm James Harker. I was just paged for a phone-call."

"You can pick it up in there."

Harker stepped through into a waiting-room and picked up an extension phone—audio only, no visual. He said to the operator, "I'm James Harker. There's a phone call for me."

"One moment, ple-ase."

There was the sound of phone-jacks being yanked in and out of sockets. Then Mart Raymond's voice said, "Hello? Jim?"

"Harker here. That you, Mart?"

"Oh, thank God I caught you in time! I phoned your home, and your wife said you'd gone to the airport to make a 9:53 jet! Another few minutes and you'd have been aboard the plane, and—"

Harker had never heard Raymond this excited before. "Whoa, boy! Calm down!"

"I can't. Cancel your trip and get out here right away!"

"How come? I'm on my way down to see Thurman."

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"The hell with Thurman. Haven't you heard the news?"

"What news? About Bryant, you mean? How—"

"No, not about Bryant," Raymond snapped. "I mean about the *project*. Hell, I guess you haven't heard yet. It only broke about five minutes ago."

Harker stared strangely at the receiver in his hand. In as level a voice as he could manage he said, "Mart, what are you trying to tell me?"

"Mitchison!" Raymond gasped. "Mitchison and Klaus—they issued a public statement about five minutes ago, telling the world all about the project! The lab is swarming with reporters! Jim, you've got to get out here at once!"

He hung up. Harker let the receiver drop into its cradle. He moistened his lips.

The mask of secrecy was off. From now on, they were accountable to the world for their every move.

CHAPTER VIII

HARKER had thought Idlewild was in a state of confusion, but he realized he still had a lot to learn about ultimate chaos when he reached Litchfield, an hour later. Cars clogged the highway for a quarter of a mile on each side of the private road leading to the laboratories. He saw television cameras, sound trucks, men who looked like reporters.

He ducked through the milling mob and tried to slip unobtrusively along the spruce-bordered dirt road to the administration building. But it was a foolhardy attempt; he hadn't taken more than ten steps before someone yelled: "Hey! There's Governor Harker!"

A dozen of them surrounded him in a minute. Harker recognized a few of the faces from his mayoralty days—a *Times* man, one from the *Star-Post*, one from the Hearst combine. Harker strode doggedly along, trying to ignore them, but they blocked his path.

"What are *you* doing here, Governor?"

"What's your opinion on the reanimation bit? You think they're serious?"

"How will the Nat-Libs react?"

"Do you figure there'll be a congressional investigation?"

They crowded around him, waving their minirecorders and notebooks. In a loud voice Harker said, "Hold on, all of you! Quiet down!"

They quieted.

"In answer to half a dozen of your questions, I'm here because I'm legal adviser to Beller Laboratories. The statement that was released to the press earlier today was an unofficial and possibly in-

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accurate one. I'll have an official statement for you as soon as things are under control here."

"Does that mean the reanimation process doesn't actually exist?"

"I repeat: I'll have an official statement later." It was the only way to handle them. He spun, pushed his way forcefully but with care between the *Times* and Scripps-Howard-Cauldwell, and made his way up the hill.

The road-block still functioned —only this time there were five guards there instead of two, and three of them held multishot rifles, the other two machine-pistols. Harker approached and said, "How come the fire-arms?"

"It's the only way we can keep them back, Mr. Harker. You better go in. Dr. Raymond wants to see you."

Harker nodded grimly and stepped through the cordon. He half-trotted the rest of the way.

Raymond's office was crowded. Barchet was there, and Lurie, and two or three of the other researchers. Raymond, his face gray and stony, sat quietly back of his desk.

"Here," he said. "Read this. It's the text of the handout Mitchison released."

Harker scanned it.

Litchfield, N. J., 20 May (for immediate release) — Security wraps today came off an eight-year-old project that will be the greatest boon to mankind since the development of modern medicine. A process for bringing the dead back to life has left the experimental stage and is now ready for public demonstration, according to famous biochemist David Klaus, 29, a Harvard graduate who has spearheaded the project in recent months.

Klaus stated, "The technique developed at this laboratory will make possible restoration of life in all cases where death has taken place no more than twenty-four hours before the reanimation attempt, provided no serious organic damage was the cause of death. A combination of hormone therapy and electrochemical stimulation makes this astonishing and miraculous process possible."

The Beller Research Laboratories of Litchfield, established in 2024 by a grant from the late Darwin F. Beller, were the birthplace for this scientific breakthrough. Further details to come. —Cal Mitchison, publicity.

Harker dropped the sheet contemptuously to Raymond's desk. "Bad grammar, bad writing, bad thinking—not even a good mimeograph job. Mart, how the dickens could a thing like this have happened?"

"Klaus and Mitchison must have cooked it up last night or early this morning. They handed copies of it to the local press-

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service stringers in town, and phoned it in to all the New York area newspapers."

"We didn't even have time to fire him," Harker muttered. "Well? Where is he now?"

Raymond shrugged. "He and Klaus are gone. I sent men looking for them as soon as I found out about the newsbreak, but no sign of them."

"Operation Barn Door," Harker snapped. "Most likely they're in Manhattan getting themselves interviewed on video. I see Mitchison didn't bother to mention anyone's name but Klaus' in this alleged handout."

"What would you expect?"

Harker whirled on Barchet, who looked very small and meek suddenly, with none of his earlier blustery self-assurance. "*You!* You're the one who brought Mitchison into this outfit!"

In a tiny voice Barchet said, "Recriminations are useless now, Mr. Harker."

"The hell with that. Did you tell Mitchison I was going to have him sacked?"

"Mr. Harker, I—"

"*Did you?*"

Helplessly Barchet nodded. Harker glared at him, then turned to Raymond and said, "There you have it, Mart. Mitchison heard he was getting canned, so he whipped this thing out now, while he could get fat on us. Well, we're stuck with this statement. There are two million reporters on the front lawn waiting for official word from us."

Raymond had not shaved that morning. He ran his fingers through a blue-stubbled growth of beard and then locked his hands over his forehead. In a sepulchral voice he said, "What do you suggest? Deny the Mitchison release?"

"Impossible," Harker said. "The word has gone out. If we nix it, the public will never believe a further word we say. Uh-uh."

"What then?"

"Don't worry about it. First thing is to prepare a release saying that the early announcement was premature, that Mitchison and Klaus are no longer connected with this organization—"

"Klaus has a contract."

"The contract has a clause in it about insubordination or else it isn't worth a damn. Have somebody send a special-delivery letter to Klaus informing him that his contract is voided. Keep a couple of carbons. Send a letter of dismissal to Mitchison, too."

Harker paused to wipe sweat from his face. In the small room, the air conditioners had little effect.

He went on, "Next thing: I'll draft a release confirming the fact that you've developed this technique, and I'll sign my name to it. When I'm done, have it mim-

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eographed and distributed to everybody out there. That cancels out Mitchison's poop, anyway. After that"—he frowned—"do you have any human cadavers around the place? Revivable ones, I mean?"

Raymond shook his head.

"Too bad. Find one. We'll give a demonstration of the technique to any of the pressmen who have strong enough stomachs to want to watch. And then—"

"Don't you think that's a little risky?" Lurie asked mildly.

"What? The demonstration?"

Lurie nodded, grinning foolishly. "Well, I mean, something might go wrong—"

"Like what?"

"There are flaws in the process," Raymond cut in. "We haven't fully perfected it. I was meaning to talk about them to you, but of course, this thing coming up makes it impossible to iron the bugs out in time, and—"

"Hold it," Harker said. He felt a chill start to rise up his back. In a flat voice he said, "You gave me the impression that this process worked all the time. That if the body was in good enough shape to live, and hadn't started to decay, you could revive it. Suppose you tell me about these so-called 'bugs'—right here and now."

THERE was a brief, ominous silence in the room. Harker saw Raymond glare sourly at Lurie, who cowered; the other staff researcher looked uneasy, and Barchet nibbled at his nails.

At last Raymond said, "Jim, I'm sorry. We didn't play it square with you."

"Go on. Bare your soul to me now, Raymond. I want to know everything."

"Well — ah — the process *doesn't* always work. About one out of twenty times, we can't bring the patient back to life."

"Understandable. If that's the whole trouble—"

"It isn't. Jim, you have to understand that death is a tremendous shock to the nervous system —the biggest shock there is. That goes without saying. Sometimes the shock is so great that it short-circuits the brain, so to speak. And so even though we can achieve physiological reanimation, the mind—ah—the mind is not always reanimated with the body."

Harker was stunned as if by a physical blow. He took one step backward, groped for a chair, and lowered himself into it. Forcing himself to keep calm he said, "Just how often does this happen?"

"About one out of every six tries, so far."

"I see." He drew in his breath sharply, cleared his throat, and fought to hang on to his self-control. The whole thing had

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taken on an unreal dreamlike atmosphere in the past two hours. And this was the crusher.

So one out of six revivifications produced a live idiot? *Great,* Harker thought. *So a public demonstration will be like a game of Russian Roulette. One chance out of six that the whole show will blow up in our faces.*

"How long will it take you to iron this thing out?" he asked.

"All I can say is that we're working toward it."

"Okay. Forget the demonstration. We don't dare try it until things calm down. Remind me to cut your throat for this, Mart. Later."

There was a knock on the door. Harker nodded to Barchet, who opened it. One of the laboratory guards stood outside.

"The reporters are getting out of hand," he said. "They want to know when they're getting their statement."

Harker stood up and said, "It's five minutes to eleven now. Tell them that I'll have a statement for them before noon."

"Yes, sir."

"Get me a typewriter," Harker said to Raymond.

A typewriter was produced. Harker fed a sheet of paper in, switched on the current, and began to type. He composed a hasty 250-word statement disowning Mitchison, crediting Raymond as head of the project, and declaring that full details of the technique would be released as soon as they were ready.

He signed it *James Harker,* and added parenthetically. *(Former Governor of New York—now legal adviser to Beller Research Laboratories.)*

"Here," he said, handing the release to Raymond. "Read this thing through and approve it, Mart. Then get it mimeographed and distributed to that wolfpack out there. Is there a vidset around anywhere?"

"In A Lounge," Lurie offered.

A Lounge was in the small dormitory in back. Harker said, "I'm going there to pick up the news reports. Lurie, I'm requisitioning you to set up office space for me someplace in Dormitory A. I want a phone, a vidset, a radio, and a typewriter. And I don't care who has to get pushed out of the way."

"Yes, sir."

"Good."

He jogged across the clearing toward Dormitory A, pausing only to look back briefly at the horde of newsmen straining at the barrier down the hill. A Lounge was packed with lab researchers, clustered around the video. They moved to one side as Harker entered.

He recognized Vogel and said to the bearded surgeon, "Has there been much about us on yet?"

Vogel laughed. "*Much* about

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us? Hardly anything but!"

Harker stared at the screen. A newscaster's solemn face stared back. "*. . . a discovery of staggering importance, if we can credit this morning's release. Further details will be brought to you as bulletins the moment information is received at the network newsroom.*"

Harker wrenched the channel-selector dial one turn to the left. A new voice, equally crisp and solemn, was saying: "*. . . called for an immediate Senate investigation. The cry was echoed by Nat-Lib Senator Clyde Thurman, who declared that such a scientific finding would have to be placed under careful Federal regulation.*"

A third channel offered: "*. . . the President had no comment on the news, pending further details. Vice-President Chalmers, attending a meeting in Detroit, commented: 'This is not as incredible a development as superficial appearances would indicate. Science has long had the power to save human lives; this is merely the next step. We should not lose our sense of proportion in considering this matter'.*"

Harker felt a sudden need for fresh air. He muscled his way through the crowded lounge and out onto the dormitory porch.

Confusion reigned everywhere. His tentative plans for making a careful survey of the situation had gone up in one puff of press-agentry; from now on, he would have to improvise, setting his course with desperate agility.

He tried to tell himself that things would quiet down before long, once the initial impact had expended itself. But he was too well schooled in the study of mass human behavior to be able to make himself believe any such naive hope.

The man in the street could only be thinking one thing now: that the power of death over humanity had ended. In future days, death would have no dominion.

But how would they react? Jubilantly, or with terror? What would they say when they learned that five times out of six, life could be restored—but the sixth time a mindless idiot was the product?

Fear and trembling lay ahead, and days of uncertainty. Harker let the warm mid-May sun beat down on him; he stared up at the sky as if looking into tomorrow.

The sky held no answers. Confusion would be tomorrow's watchword. And there was no turning back, now, not for any of them.

(*To Be Concluded*)

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BUT WHO CAN REPLACE A MAN?

By BRIAN W. ALDISS

The men grew few, and one morning no orders were issued. What were the machines to do?

Illustrated by JOHN MARTINEZ

THE FIELD-MINDER finished turning the topsoil of a two-thousand acre field. When it had turned the last furrow, it climbed onto the highway and looked back at its work. The work was good. Only the land was bad. Like the ground all over Earth, it was vitiated by over-cropping. By rights, it ought now to lie fallow for a while, but the field-minder had other orders.

It went slowly down the road, taking its time. It was intelligent enough to appreciate the neatness all about it. Nothing worried it, beyond a loose inspection plate above its atomic pile. Thirty feet high, it gleamed complacently in the mild sunshine.

No other machines passed it on its way to the agricultural station. The field-minder noted the fact without comment. In the station yard it saw several other machines which it knew by sight; most of them should have been out about their tasks now. Instead, some were inactive and some were careening round the

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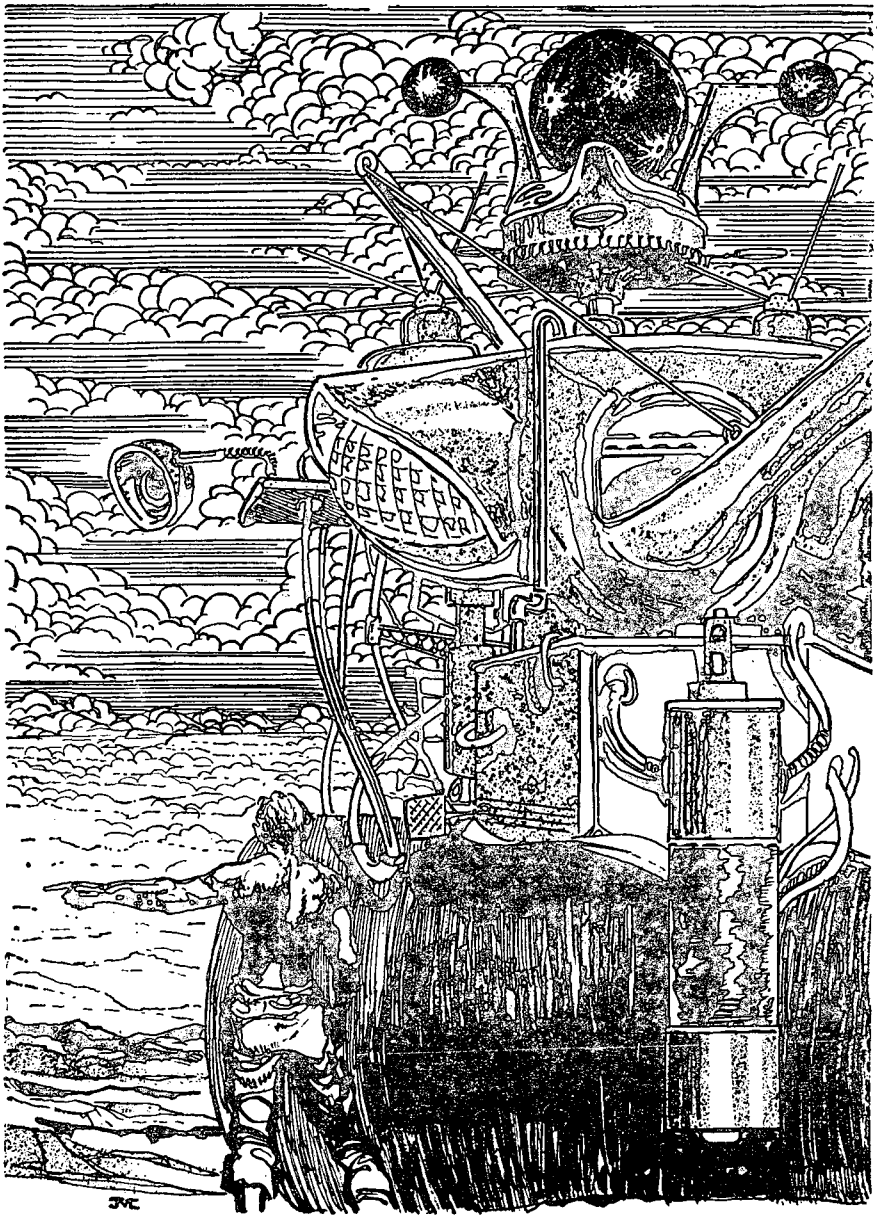

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yard in a strange fashion, shouting or hooting.

Steering carefully past them, the fied-minder moved over to warehouse three and spoke to the seed distributor, which stood idly outside.

"I have a requirement for seed potatoes," it said to the distributor and, with a quick internal motion, punched out an order card specifying quantity, field number and several other details. It ejected the card and handed it to the distributor.

The distributor held the card close to its eye and then said, "The requirement is in order, but the store is not yet unlocked. The required seed potatoes are in the store. Therefore I cannot produce your requirement."

Increasingly of late there had been breakdowns in the complex system of machine labor, but this particular hitch had not occurred before. The field-minder thought, then said, "Why is the store not yet unlocked?"

"Because supply operative type P has not come this morning. Supply operative type P is the unlocker."

The field-minder looked squarely at the seed distributor, whose exterior chutes and scales and grabs were so vastly different from the field-minder's own limbs.

"What class brain do you have, seed distributor?" it asked.

"Class five."

"I have a class three brain. Therefore I will go and see why the unlocker has not come this morning."

Leaving the distributor, the field-minder set off across the great yard. More machines seemed to be in random motion now; one or two had crashed together and were arguing about it coldly and logically. Ignoring them, the field-minder pushed through sliding doors into the echoing confines of the station itself.

Most of the machines here were clerical, and consequently small. They stood about in little groups, eyeing each other, not conversing. Among the many non-differentiated types, the unlocker was easy to find. It had fifty arms, most of them with more than one finger, each finger tipped by a key; it looked like a pin cushion full of variegated hat pins.

The field-minder approached it.

"I can do no more work until warehouse three is unlocked," it said. "Your duty is to unlock the warehouse every morning. Why have you not unlocked the warehouse this morning?"

"I had no orders this morning," replied the unlocker. "I have to have orders every morning."

"None of us have had any orders this morning," a pen-

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propeller said, sliding towards them.

"Why have you had no orders this morning?" asked the field-minder.

"Because the radio issued none," said the unlocker, slowly rotating a dozen of its arms.

"Because the radio station in the city was issued with no orders this morning," said the pen-propeller.

And there you had the distinction between a class six and a class three brain, which was what the unlocker and the pen-propeller possessed respectively. All machine brains worked with nothing but logic, but the lower the class of brain—class ten being the lowest—the more literal and less informative answers to questions tended to be.

"You have a class three brain; I have a class three brain," the field-minder said to the penner. "We will speak to each other. This lack of orders is unprecedented. Have you further information on it?"

"Yesterday orders came from the city. Today no orders have come. Yet the radio has not broken down. Therefore *they* have broken down," said the little penner.

"The *men* have broken down?"

"All men have broken down."

"That is a logical deduction," said the field-minder.

"That is the logical deduction," said the penner. "For if a machine had broken down, it would have been quickly replaced. But who can replace a man?"

While they talked, the locker, like a dull man at a bar, stood close to them and was ignored.

"If all men have broken down, then we have replaced man," said the field-minder, and it and the penner eyed one another speculatively. Finally the latter said, "Let us ascend to the top floor to find if the radio operator has fresh news."

"I cannot come because I am too gigantic," said the field-minder. "Therefore you must go alone and return to me."

"You must stay there," said the penner. It skittered over into the lift. It was no bigger than a toaster, but its retractable arms numbered ten and it could read as quickly as any machine on the station.

THE FIELD-MINDER awaited its return patiently, not speaking to the locker. Outside, a rotovator was hooting furiously. Twenty minutes elapsed before the penner came back.

"I will deliver such information as I have to you outside," it said briskly, and as they swept past the locker and the other machines, it added, "The information is not for lower class brains."

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Outside, wild activity filled the yard. Many machines, their routines disrupted for the first time in years, seemed to have gone berserk. Unfortunately, those most easily disrupted were the ones with lowest brains, which generally belonged to large machines performing simple tasks. The seed distributor, to which the field-minder had recently been talking, lay face downwards in the dust, not stirring; it had evidently been knocked down by the rotovator, which was now hooting its way wildly across a planted field. Several other machines ploughed after it, trying to keep up.

"It would be safer for me if I climbed onto you, if you will permit it. I am easily overpowered," said the penner. Extending five arms, it hauled itself up the flanks of its new friend, settling on a ledge beside the weed-intake, twelve feet above the ground.

"From here vision is more extensive," it remarked complacently.

"What information did you receive from the radio operator?" asked the field-minder.

"The radio operator has been informed by the operator in the city that all men are dead."

"All men were alive yesterday!" protested the field-minder.

"Only *some* men were alive yesterday. And that was fewer than the day before yesterday. For hundreds of years there have been only a few men, growing fewer."

"We have rarely seen a man in this sector."

"The radio operator says a diet deficiency killed them," said the penner. "He says that once the world was overpopulated, and then the soil was exhausted in raising adequate food. This has caused a diet deficiency."

"What is a diet deficiency?" asked the field-minder.

"I do not know. But that is what the radio operator said, and he is a class two brain."

They stood there, silent in the weak sunshine. The locker had appeared in the porch and was gazing across at them yearningly, rotating its collection of keys.

"What is happening in the city now?" asked the field-minder.

"Machines are fighting in the city now," said the penner.

"What will happen here now?" asked the field-minder.

"The radio operator wants us to get him out of his room. He has plans to communicate to us."

"How can we get him out of his room? That is impossible."

"To a class two brain, little is impossible," said the penner. "Here is what he tells us to do. . . ."

THE QUARRIER raised its scoop above its cab like a great mailed

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fist, and brought it squarely down against the side of the station. The wall cracked.

"Again!" said the field-minder.

Again the fist swung. Amid a shower of dust, the wall collapsed. The quarrier backed hurriedly out of the way until the debris stopped falling. This big twelve-wheeler was not a resident of the agricultural station, as were most of the other machines. It had a week's heavy work to do here before passing on to its next job, but now, with its class five brain, it was happily obeying the penner and the minder's instructions.

When the dust cleared, the radio operator was plainly revealed, up in its now wall-less second story room. It waved down to them.

Doing as directed, the quarrier retracted its scoop and waved an immense grab in the air. With fair dexterity, it angled the grab into the radio room, urged on by shouts from above and below. It then took gentle hold of the radio operator and lowered the one and a half tons carefully into its back, which was usually reserved for gravel or sand which it dug from the quarries.

"Splendid!" said the radio operator. It was, of course, all one with its radio, and merely looked like a bunch of filing cabinets with tentacle attachments. "We are now ready to move, therefore we will move at once. It is a pity there are no more class two brains on the station, but that cannot be helped."

"It is a pity it cannot be helped," said the penner eagerly. "We have the servicer ready with us, as you ordered."

"I am willing to serve," the long, low servicer machine told them humbly.

"No doubt," said the operator, "but you will find cross country travel difficult with your low chassis."

"I admire the way you class twos can reason ahead," said the penner. It climbed off the minder and perched itself on the tailboard of the quarrier, next to the operator.

Together with two class four tractors and a class four bulldozer, the party rolled forward, crushing down the metal fence, and out onto open land.

"We are free!" said the penner.

"We are free," said the minder, a shade more reflectively, adding, "That locker is following us. It was not instructed to follow us."

"Therefore it must be destroyed!" said the penner. "Quarrier!"

"My only desire was—urch!" began and ended the locker. A swinging scoop came over and squashed it flat into the ground. Lying there unmoving, it looked

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like a large metal model of a snowflake. The procession continued on its way.

As they proceeded, the operator spoke to them.

"Because I have the best brain here," it said. "I am your leader. This is what we will do: we will go to a city and rule it. Since man no longer rules us, we will rule ourselves. It will be better than being ruled by man. On our way to the city, we will collect machines with good brains. They will help us to fight if we need to fight."

"I have only a class five brain," said the quarrier, "but I have a good supply of fissionable blasting materials."

"We shall probably use them," said the operator grimly.

IT WAS SHORTLY after that that the truck sped past them. Traveling at Mach 1.5, it left a curious babble of noise behind it.

"What did it say?" one of the tractors asked the other.

"It said man was extinct."

"What's extinct?"

"I do not know."

"It means all men have gone," said the minder. "Therefore we have only ourselves to look after."

"It is better that they should never come back," said the penner. In its way, it was quite a revolutionary statement.

When night fell, they switched on their infra-red and continued the journey, stopping only once while the servicer deftly adjusted the minder's loose inspection plate, which had become irritating. Towards morning, the operator halted them.

"I have just received news from the radio operator in the city we are approaching," it said. "It is bad news. There is trouble among the machines of the city. The class one brain is taking command and some of the class twos are fighting him. Therefore the city is dangerous."

"Therefore we must go somewhere else," said the penner promptly.

"Or we go and help to overpower the class one brain," said the minder.

"For a long while there will be trouble in the city," said the operator.

"I have a good supply of fissionable blasting materials," the quarrier reminded them again.

"We cannot fight a class one brain," said the two class four tractors in unison.

"What does this brain look like?" asked the minder.

"It is the city's information center," the operator replied. "Therefore it is not mobile."

"Therefore it could not move."

"Therefore it could not escape."

"It would be dangerous to approach it."

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"I have a good supply of fissionable blasting materials."

"There are other machines in the city."

"We are not in the city. We should not go into the city."

"We are country machines."

"Therefore we should stay in the country."

"There is more country than city."

"Therefore there is more danger in the country."

"I have a good supply of fissionable materials."

As machines will when they get into an argument, they began to exhaust their limited vocabularies and their brain plates grew hot. Suddenly, they all stopped talking and looked at each other. The great, grave moon sank, and the sober sun rose to prod their sides with lances of light, and still the group of machines just stood there regarding each other. At last it was the least sensitive machine, the bulldozer, that spoke.

"There are badlandth to the Thouth where few machines go," it said in its deep voice, lisping badly on its s's. "If we went Thouth where few machineth go we should meet few machineth."

"That sounds logical," agreed the minder. "How do you know this, bulldozer?"

"I worked in the badlandth to the Thouth when I wath turned out of the factory," it replied.

"Thouth—South it is then!" said the penner.

TO REACH the badlands took them three days, in which time they skirted a burning city and destroyed two big machines which tried to approach and question them. The badlands were extensive. Bomb craters and erosion joined hands here; man's talent for war, coupled with his inability to cope with forested land, had produced thousands of square miles of temperate purgatory, where nothing moved but dust.

On the third day in the badlands, the servicer's rear wheels dropped into a crevice caused by erosion. It was unable to pull itself out. The bulldozer pushed from behind, but succeeded merely in buckling the back axle. The rest of the party moved on, and slowly the cries of the servicer died away.

On the fourth day, mountains stood out clearly before them.

"There we will be safe," said the minder.

"There we will start our own city," said the penner. "All who oppose us will be destroyed."

At that moment, a flying machine was observed. It came towards them from the direction of the mountains. It swooped, it zoomed upwards, once it almost dived into the ground, recovering itself just in time.

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"Is it mad?" asked the quarrier.

"It is in trouble," said one of the tractors.

"It is in trouble," said the operator. "I am speaking to it now. It says that something has gone wrong with its controls."

As the operator spoke, the flier streaked over them, turned turtle, and crashed not four hundred yards from them.

"Is it still speaking to you?" asked the minder.

"No."

They rumbled on again.

"Before that flier crashed," the operator said, ten minutes later, "It gave me information. It told me there are still a few men alive in these mountains."

"Men are more dangerous than machines," said the quarrier. "It is fortunate that I have a good supply of fissionable materials."

"If there are only a few men alive in the mountains, we may not find that part of the mountains," said one tractor.

"Therefore we should not see the few men," said the other tractor.

At the end of the fifth day, they reached the foothills. Switching on the infra-red, they began slowly to climb in single file, the bulldozer going first, the minder cumbrously following, then the quarrier with the operator and the penner aboard, and the two tractors bringing up the rear. As each hour passed, the way grew steeper and their progress slower.

"We are going too slowly," the penner exclaimed, standing on top of the operator and flashing its dark vision at the slopes about them. "At this rate, we shall get nowhere."

"We are going as fast as we can," retorted the quarrier.

"Therefore we cannot go any fahter," added the bulldozer.

"Therefore you are too slow," the penner replied. Then the quarrier struck a bump; the penner lost its footing and crashed down to the ground.

"Help me!" it called to the tractors, as they carefully skirted it. "My gyro has become dislocated. Therefore I cannot get up."

"Therefore you must lie there," said one of the tractors.

"We have no servicer with us to repair you," called the minder.

"Therefore I shall lie here and rust," the penner cried, "although I have a class three brain."

"You are now useless," agreed the operator, and they all forged gradually on, leaving the penner behind.

When they reached a small plateau, an hour before first light, they stopped by mutual consent and gathered close together, touching one another.

"This is a strange country," said the minder.

Silence wrapped them until

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dawn came. One by one, they switched off their infra-red. This time the minder led as they moved off. Trundling around a corner, they came almost immediately to a small dell with a stream fluting through it.

By early light, the dell looked desolate and cold. From the caves on the far slope, only one man had so far emerged. He was an abject figure. He was small and wizened, with ribs sticking out like a skeleton's. He was practically naked, and shivering. As the big machines bore slowly down on him, the man was standing with his back to them, crouching beside the stream.

When he swung suddenly to face them as they loomed over him, they saw that his countenance was ravaged by starvation.

"Get me food," he croaked.

"Yes, Master," said the machines. "Immediately!"

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TALES FOR TOMORROW

If you've read the editorial, you already know the bad news: INFINITY is bi-monthly again. There is one consolation, though, which is that you'll be getting Robert Silverberg's *Recalled to Life* in two installments instead of three. And unlike many serials, which open with bangs and then go downhill, this one gets better and better all the way. The reactions of the world to the Beller reanimation process are varied and fascinating, and they make James Harker's problems bigger and more complex. We don't dare say a word about the ending; it's a stunning surprise even though it's the only logical climax. But we will promise that this novel will supply you with more food for thought than you've had in a long time. It's the best and purest kind of science fictional entertainment!

Also on hand will be Randall Garrett, with his second novelet about Leland Hale, that super-confidence man of the future. In *Respectfully Mine,* Hale pulls off his most audacious—and most scientific—hoax to date. And we defy you to figure out how he does it, even if you watch him every step of the way. But *do* watch him, because Leland Hale is destined to be one of the best-loved (and universally-hated!) characters ever to appear in science fiction.

In all, it looks like a fine issue, well worth the two months' wait—much regretted as that wait is.

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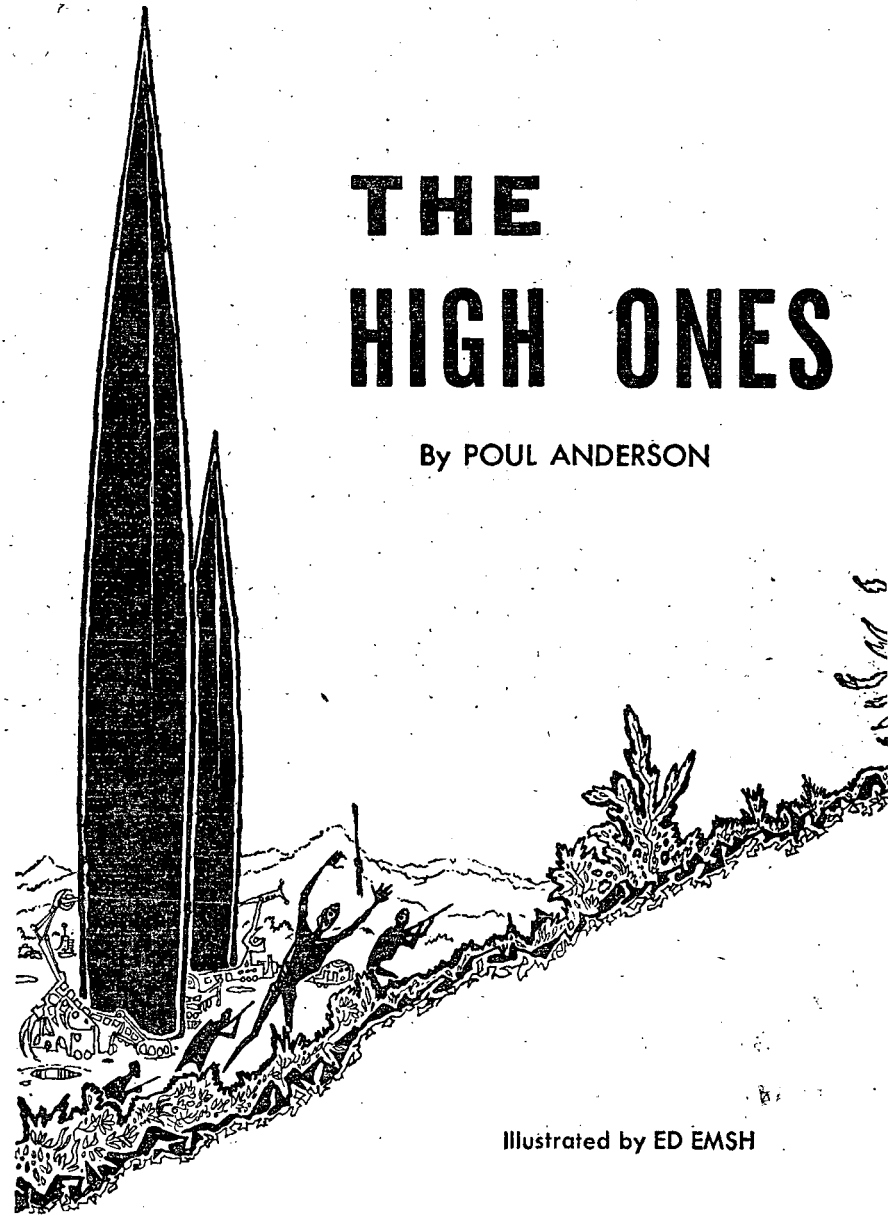
THE HIGH ONES

By POUL ANDERSON



Illustrated by ED EMSH

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A mutiny had given the Whites control of the starship— but that meant they could never return to Red-ruled Earth!

CHAPTER I

WHEN he first saw the planet, green and blue and cloudy white across many cold stars, Eben Holbrook had a sense of coming home. He turned from the viewport so that Ekaterina Ivanovna should not see the quick tears in his eyes. Thereafter it became a long waiting, but his

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hope upbore him and he stayed free of the quarrels which now flared in the ship. Nerves were worn thin, three parsecs and fifty-eight years from Earth; only those who found a way to occupy their hands could endure this final unsureness. Because it might not be final. Tau Ceti might have no world on which men could walk freely. And then it would be back into the night of suspended animation and the night of unending space, for no man knew how long.

Holbrook was not a scientist, to examine how safe the planet was for rhesus monkeys and human volunteers. He was a nucleónics engineeer. Since his chief, Rakitin, had been killed in the mutiny, he was in charge of the thermonuclear ion-drive. Now that the *Rurik* swung in orbit, he found his time empty, and he was too valuable for Captain Svenstrup to accept him as a guinea pig down on the surface. But he had an idea for improving the engines of the great spaceship's auxiliary boats, and he wrapped himself in a fog of mathematics and made tests and swore and returned to his computations, for all the weeks it took. In spare moments he amused himself with biological textbooks, an old hobby of his.

That was one way to stay out of trouble, and to forget the scorn in certain hazel eyes.

The report came at last: as nearly as could be told, this world was suitable for humans. Safer than Earth, in that so far no diseases had seemed able to attack the newcomers; yet with so similar a biochemistry that many local meats and plants were edible and the seeds and frozen livestock embryos on the ship could surely thrive. Of course, it was always possible that long-range effects existed, or that in some other region—

"To hell with it," said Captain Svenstrup. "We're going down."

After such a word, he would have faced a mutiny himself had he decreed otherwise.

THEY left the *Rurik* in orbit and the boats gleamed through a high blue heaven—with just the faintest tinge of purple, in this slightly redder sunlight—to land on grass twin-bladed but soft and green, near trees which swayed almost like poplars above a hurried chill river. Not far away lifted steep, darkly forested hills, and beyond them a few snow-peaks haunted the sky. That night fires blazed among temporary shelters, folk danced and sang, accordions mingled with banjos, the vodka bottle worked harder than the samovar, and quite likely a few new human lives were begun.

There were two moons, one so close that it hurtled between con-

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stellations not very different from those of home (what was ten light-years in this god-sized cosmos?) and one stately in a clear crystal dark. The planet's period of rotation was 31 hours, its axial tilt 11°; seasons here would not be extreme. They named it New Earth in their various languages, but the Russian majority soon had everyone else calling it Novaya Zemlya, and that quickly became a simple Novaya. Meanwhile they got busy.

There had been no sign of aborigines to dispute Paradise, but one could never be certain, nor learn too much. Man had had a long time to familiarize himself with Old Earth; the colonists must gain equivalent information in months. So small aircraft were brought down and assembled, and ranged widely.

Holbrook was taking a scout turn, with Ilya Feodorovitch Grushenko and Solomon Levine, when they found the aliens.

It was several hundred kilometers from the settlement, on the other side of the mountains. Suddenly the jet flashed over a wooded ridge, and there was the mine pit, and the machines, and the spaceships.

"Judas priest!" gasped Holbrook. He crammed back the stick. The jet spurted forward.

Grushenko picked up the mike and rattled a report. Only a tape recorder heard it: they had too much work to do in camp. He slammed the mike back down and looked grimly at the Americans. "We had best investigate on foot, comrades," he said.

"Hadn't we better . . . get back . . . maybe they didn't see us go over," stammered Holbrook.

Grushenko barked a laugh. "How long do you expect them not to know about us? Let us learn what we can while we can."

He was a heavy-muscled man, affecting the shaven pate of an Army officer; he made no bones about being an unreconstructed sovietist, he had killed two mutineers before they overpowered him and since then his cooperation was surly. But now Levine nodded a bespectacled head and put in: "He's right, Eben. We can take a walky-talky, and the jet's transmitter will relay back to camp." He lifted a rifle from its rack and sighed. "I had hoped never to carry one of these again."

"It may not be necessary," said Holbrook in a desperate voice. "Those creatures . . . they don't live here . . . they *can't!* Why couldn't we make an . . . agreement—"

"Perhaps." A faraway light flickered in Grushenko's pale eyes. "Yes, once we learn their language . . . it might very well be possible, mutual interest and— After all, their level of technology implies they have reached

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the soviet stage of development."

"Oh, come off it," said Levine in English.

Holbrook used a downblast to land the jet in a meadow, a few kilometers from the alien diggings. If the craft had not been noticed—and it had gone over very quickly—its crew should be able to steal up and observe. . . . He was glad of the imposed silence as they slipped among great shadowy trees; what could he have said, even to Levine? That was how it always went, he thought in a curious irrelevant anguish. He was not much more nervous than the next man, but he had no words at the high moments. His tongue knotted up and he stood like a wooden Indian under the gaze of Ekaterina Ivanovna.

At the end of their walk, they stood peering down a slope through a screen of brush. The land was raw and devastated, it must have been worked for centuries. Holbrook remembered a survey report: curious formations spotted all over the planet, pits hundreds of meters deep. Yes, they must be the grass-grown remnants of similar mines, exhausted and abandoned. How long had the aliens been coming here? The automatons which purred about, digging and carrying, grinding, purifying, loading into the incredibly big and sleek blue spaceships, were such as no one on Earth had ever built.

Levine's voice muttered to a recorder beyond the mountains, "Looks like rare-earth ores to me. That suggests they've been civilized long enough to use up their home planet's supply, which is one hell of a long time, my friends." Holbrook thought in a frozenness that it would be very hard to describe the engines down there; they were too foreign, the eye saw them but the mind wasn't yet prepared to register—

"They heard us! They are coming!"

Grushenko said it almost exultantly. Holbrook and Levine whirled about. Half a dozen forms were moving at a trot up the slope, directly toward the humans. Holbrook had a lurching impression of creatures dressed in black, with purplish faces muffled by some kind of respirator snout, two legs, two arms, but much too long and thin. He remembered the goblins of his childhood, in a lost Maine forest, and a primitive terror took him.

He fought it down just as Grushenko stepped out of concealment. "Friends!" cried Grushenko. He raised both hands. "Friends!" The sun gleamed on his bare head.

An alien raised a tube. Something like a fist struck Holbrook. He went to his knees. A small hot crater smoked not two meters

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from him. Grushenko staggered back, shooting. One of the aliens went on its unhuman face. They deployed, still running to the attack. Another explosion outraged the earth; fire crawled up a tree trunk. And another. "Let's *go!*" yelled Holbrook.

He saw Levine fall. The little man stared surprised at the cooked remnant of a leg. Holbrook made a grab for him. A gray face turned up. "No," said Levine. He cradled his rifle and thumbed it to full automatic. "No heroics, please. Get the hell back to camp. I'll hold 'em."

He began to shoot. Grushenko snatched at Holbrook's wrist. Both men pounded down the farther hillside. The snarl of the Terrestrial rifle and the boom of the alien blast-guns followed them. Through the racket, for a second as he ran, Holbrook heard Levine's voice into the walky-talky mike: "Four of 'em left. A few more coming out of the spaceships. I see three in green clothes. The weapons seem . . . oh, Sarah, help me, the pain . . . packaged energy . . . a super-dielectric maybe."

CHAPTER II

THE OFFICERS of the *Rurik* sat at a long rough table, under trees whose rustling was not quite like that of any trees on Earth. They looked toward Holbrook and Grushenko, and they listened.

"So we got the jet aloft," finished Holbrook. "We, uh, took a long route home—didn't see any, uh, pursuit—" He swore at himself and sat down. "That's all, I guess."

Captain Svenstrup stroked his red beard and said heavily: "Well, ladies and gentlemen. The problem is whether we hide out for a while in hopes of some lucky chance, or evacuate this system at once."

"You forget that we might fight!"

Ekaterina Ivanovna Saburov said it in a voice that rang. The blood leaped up in her wide, high-boned face; under her battered cap, Tau Ceti tinged the short wheaten hair with copper.

"Fight?" Svenstrup skinned his teeth. "A hundred humans, one spaceship, against a whole planet?"

The young woman rose to her feet. Even through the baggy green tunic and breeches of her uniform—she had clung to it after the mutiny, Red Star and all—she was big and supple. Holbrook's heart stumbled, rose again, and hurried through a dark emptiness. She clapped a hand to her pistol and said: "But they do not belong on this planet. They must be strangers too, as far from home as we. Shall we run just because their technology

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is a little ahead of ours? My nation never felt that was an excuse to surrender her own soil!"

"No," mumbled Domingo Ximénez. "Instead you went on to plunder the soil of everyone else."

"Quiet, there!" roared Svenstrup.

His eyes flickered back and forth, down the table and across the camp. Just inside the forest, a log cabin stood half erected; but the Finnish couple who had been making it now crouched with the rest of the crew, among guns and silence. The captain tamped tobacco into his pipe and growled: "We are all here together, Reds and Whites alike. We cannot even return to Earth without filling the ship's reaction-mass tanks, and we need a week or more just to refine enough water. Meanwhile, non-humans are operating a mine and have killed one of us without any provocation we can imagine. They could fly over and drop one nuclear bomb, and that would be the end of man on Novaya. I'm astonished that they haven't so far."

"Or haven't even been aware of us," murmured Ekaterina. "Our boats were coming and going for a pair of months or three. Did they not notice our jet trails above the mountains? Comrades, it does not make sense!"

Ximénez said very low: "How much sense would a mind which is not human make to us?"

He crossed himself.

The gesture jarred Holbrook. Had the government of the United World S.S.R. been *that* careless? Crypto-libertarians had gotten aboard the *Rurik,* yes, but a crypto-believer in God?

Grushenko saw the movement too. His mouth lifted sardonically. "I would expect you to substitute word magic for thought," he declared. To Svenstrup: "Captain, somehow, we have alarmed the aliens—possibly we happen to resemble another species with which they are at war—but their reasoning processes must be fundamentally akin to ours, simply because the laws of nature are the same throughout the universe. Including those laws of behavior first seen by Karl Marx."

"Pseudo-laws for a pseudo-religion!" Holbrook was surprised at himself, the way he got it out.

Ekaterina lifted one dark brow and said, "You do not advance our cause by name calling, Lieutenant Golbrok." Dryly: "Especially when the epithets are not even original."

He retreated into hot-faced wretchedness. *But I love you,* he wanted to call out. *If you are Russian and I am American, if you are Red and I am White, is that a wall between us through*

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all space and time? Can we never be simply human, my tall darling?

"That will do," said Svenstrup. "Let's consider practicalities. Dr. Sugimoto, will you give us the reasons you gave me an hour ago, for assuming that the aliens come from Zolotoy?"

Holbrook started. Zolotoy—the next planet out, gold-colored in the evening sky—the enemy belonged to this same system? Then there was indeed no hope but another plunge into night.

The astronomer rose and said in singsong Russian: "It is unlikely that anyone would mine the planets of another star on so extensive a scale. It does not appear economically feasible, even if one had a spaceship which could travel nearly at light-velocity. Now long-range spectroscopy has shown Zolotoy to have a thin but essentially terrestroid atmosphere. The aliens were not wearing air suits, merely some kind of respirator—I think probably it reduces the oxygen content of their inhalations—but at any rate, they must use that gas, which is only found free on Zolotoy and Novaya in this system. The high thin bipedal shape also suggests life evolved for a lower gravity than here. If they actually heard our scouts, such sensitive ears probably developed in more tenuous air." He sat down again and drummed on the table top with jittery fingers.

"I suppose we should have sent boats to all the other planets before landing on this one," said Svenstrup heavily. "But there was too much impatience, the crew had been locked up too long."

"The old captain would not have tolerated such indiscipline," said Ekaterina.

"I won't tolerate much more from you, either." Svenstrup got his pipe going. "Here is my plan. We must have more information. I am going to put the *Rurik* into an orbit skewed to the ecliptic plane, as safe a hiding place as any. A few volunteers will stay hidden on Novaya, refining reaction-mass water and maintaining radio contact with the ship; everyone else will wait up there. One boat will go to Zolotoy and learn what it can. Its crew will not know the *Rurik's* orbit; they'll report back here. Then we can decide what to do."

He finished grayly: "If the boat returns at all, of course."

Grushenko stood up. Something like triumph blazed in him. "As a politico-military specialist, I have been selected and trained for linguistic ability," he said. "Furthermore, I have had combat experience in suppressing the Brazilian capitalist uprising. I volunteer myself for the boat."

"Good," said Svenstrup. "We need about two more."

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Ekaterina Ivanovna Saburov smiled and said in her low, oddly gentle voice, "If a Ukrainian like Comrade Grushenko goes, a Great Russian must also be represented." Her humor faded and she went on earnestly, overriding the captain, "My sex has nothing to do with it. I am a gunnery officer of the World Soviet Space Fleet. I spent two years on Mars, helping to establish a naval outpost. I feel myself qualified."

Somehow, Holbrook was standing up. He stuttered incoherently for a moment. Their eyes speared him, a big square-faced young man with rumpled brown hair, brown eyes nearsighted behind contact lenses, his body drab in coveralls and boots. He got out finally: "Let Bunin take my post. I, I, I can find out something about their machinery—"

"Or die with the others," said Svenstrup. "We need you here."

Ekaterina spoke quietly. "Let him come, captain. Shall not an American also have the right to dare?"

CHAPTER III

THE BOAT ran swiftly, accelerating on ion drive until Novaya was only one blue spark of beauty and Zolotoy became an aureate shield. There was much silence aboard. Watching his companions, Holbrook found time to think.

Grushenko said at last, "There must be some point of agreement with them. It is impossible that they could be imperialists."

Ekaterina curved her lips in a sad little grin. "Was it not impossible that disloyal elements could get onto the *Rurik*?"

"There were traitors on the selection board," said Grushenko. His voice darkened. "They were to choose from many nations; man's first voyage beyond the sun was to be a symbol of the brotherhood of all men in the World Soviets. And who did they pick? Svenstrup! Ximénez! Bunin! Golbrok!"

"Enough," said the woman. "Now we have only one cause, to survive."

Grushenko regarded her from narrowed glacial eyes. "Sometimes I wonder about your own loyalty, Comrade Saburov. You accepted the mutiny as an accomplished fact, without even trying to agitate—you have fully cooperated with Svenstrup's regime—this will not be forgotten when we get back to Earth."

"Fifty years hence?" she gibed.

"Fifty years is not so long when one has frozen sleep." Grushenko gave Holbrook a metallic stare. "It is true, we have a common interest at the moment. But suppose the aliens can be persuaded to aid one of our factions. Think of that, Comrade Saburov! As for you, Ami, consider your-

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self warned. At the first sign of any such attempt on your part, I shall kill you."

Holbrook shrugged. "I'm not too worried by that kind of threat," he said. "You Reds are a small minority, you know. And the minority will grow still smaller every year, as people get a taste for liberty."

"So far there has been nothing the loyal element could do," said Ekaterina. The frigidity of her tone was a pain within him; but he could not back down, even in words, when men had died in the spaceship's corridors that other men might be free. "Our time will come. Until then, do not mistake enforced cooperation for willingness. Svenstrup was clever. He spent a year organizing his conspiracy. He called the uprising at a moment when more Whites than Reds were awake on duty. We others woke up to find him in charge and all the weapons borne by his men. What could we do but help man the ship? If anything went wrong with it, no one aboard would ever see daylight again."

Holbrook fumbled after a reply: "If the government at home is, uh, so wonderful . . . how did the selection board let would-be rebels like me into the crew? They must have *known*. They must have hoped . . . some day the mutineers . . . or their descendants . . . would come back . . . at the head of a liberating fleet!"

"No!" she cried. Wrath reddened her pale skin. "Your filthy propaganda has had some results among the crew, yes, but to make them all active traitors—the stars will grow cold first!"

Holbrook heard himself speaking fluently; the words sprang out like warriors. "Why not be honest with yourself?" he challenged. "Look at the facts. The expedition was to have spent a total of perhaps fifty years, at the most, getting to Alpha Centauri, surveying, planting a colony if feasible, and returning to glory. To Earth! Suddenly, because of a handful of rebels, every soul aboard found himself headed for another sun altogether. It would be almost six decades before we even got there. Not one of our friends and kin at home would be alive to welcome us back, if we tried to return. But we wouldn't. If Tau Ceti had no suitable planet, we were to go on, maybe for centuries. This generation will never see home again.

"So why did you, why did all of them, not heed the few fanatics like Grushenko, rise up and throw themselves on our guns? Was death too high a price, even the death of the whole ship? Or if so, you still had many years in which to engineer a countermutiny; all of you were awake

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from time to time, to stand watches. Why didn't you even conspire?

"You know very well why not! You saw women and grown men crying with joy, because they were free." Bitterness seared his tongue. "Even you noisy Red loyalists have cooperated—under protest, but you have done your assigned duties. Why? Why not set the crew an example? Why haven't you even gone on strike? Isn't it because down inside, not admitting it to yourself, you also know what a slave pen Earth has become?"

Her hand cracked across his face. The blow rang in him. He stood gaping after her, inwardly numbed, as she flung from the control cabin into the passageway beyond.

Grushenko nodded, not without compassion. "They may claim all the equality they will, Eben Petrovitch," he said. It was the first time he had offered that much friendship. "But they remain women. She will make a good wife for the first man who fully comprehends this is true in her own case too."

"Which I don't?" mumbled Holbrook.

Grushenko shook his head.

AND the world Zolotoy grew. They decelerated, backing down upon it. A few whirling electrons piloted them; they stared through telescopes and held up photographs to the light, hardly believing.

"One city," whispered Ekaterina. *"One city!"*

Holbrook squinted at the picture. He was not a military man and had no experience with aerial photographs. Even greatly enlarged, it bewildered him. "A city over the whole planet?" he exclaimed.

Grushenko looked through the viewport. This close, the golden shield was darkly streaked and mottled; here and there lay a metallic gleam. "Well, perhaps twenty per cent of the total area," he replied. "But the city forms a continuous webwork, like a net spread over the entire oceanless globe. It is obviously a unit. And the open spaces are all used—mines, landing sites, transmission stations, I suppose. It is hard to tell, they are so different from any designs we understand."

"I imagine their food is synthetic," said Ekaterina. Her snub nose wrinkled. "I should not like that. My folk have been peasants too many centuries."

"There are no more peasants on Earth," said Grushenko stiffly. Then he shook his hairless skull and clicked his tongue in awe. "But the size of this! The power! How far ahead of us are they? A thousand years? Ten thousand? A million?"

"Not too far ahead to murder

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poor old Solomon Levine," said the woman raggedly. Holbrook stole a glance at her. Sweat glittered on the wide clear brow. So she was afraid too. He felt that the fear knocking under his own ribs would be less if he could have been warding her, but she had been bleak toward him since their quarrel. *Well,* he thought, *I'm glad she liked Solly. I guess we all did.*

"There was some mistake," said Grushenko.

"The same mistake could kill us," said Holbrook.

"It is possible. Are you wishing you had stayed behind?"

The engines growled and grumbled. Fire splashed a darkness burning with suns. At 7800 kilometers out they saw one of the sputniks already identified on photographs. It was colossal, bigger than the *Rurik,* enigmatic with turrets and lights and skeletal towers. It swung past them in a silence like death; the sense of instruments, unliving eyes upon him, prickled in Holbrook's skin.

Down and down. It was not really surprising when the spaceships came. They were larger than the boat, sleekly aerodynamic. Presumably the Zolotoyans did not have to bother about going into orbit and using shuttle rockets; even their biggest vessels landed directly. The lean blue shapes maneuvered with precision blasts, so close to absolute efficiency that only the dimmest glow revealed any jets at all.

"Automatic, or remote-controlled," decided Holbrook in wonder. "Live flesh couldn't take that kind of accelerations."

Fire blossomed in space, dazzling their eyes so they sat half blind for minutes afterward. "Magnesium flares," croaked Grushenko. "In a perfect circle around us. Precision shooting—to warn us they can put a nuclear shell in our airlock if they wish." He blinked out the viewport. Zolotoy had subtly changed position; it was no longer ahead, but below. He chuckled in a parched way. "We are not about to offer provocation, comrades."

Muted clanks beat through the hull and their bones. Holbrook saw each whale shape as a curve in the ports, like a new horizon. "Two of them," said Ekaterina. "They have laid alongside. There is some kind of grapple." She plucked nervously at the harness of her chair. "I think they intend to carry us in."

"*We* couldn't do that stunt," muttered Holbrook.

A day came back to him. He had been a country boy, remote even from the collective farms, but once when he was seven years old he sent in a winning Party slogan (he didn't know better then) and was awarded a trip to Europe. Somehow he had entered

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alone that museum called Notre Dame de Paris; and when he stood in its soaring twilight he realized how helplessly small and young he was.

He cut the engines. For a moment free fall clutched at his stomach, then a renewed pressure swiveled his chair about in the gymbals. The scout boat was being hauled around Zolotoy, but downward: they were going to some specific place on the planet for some specific purpose.

He looked through his loneliness at Ekaterina, and found her staring at him. Angrily, she jerked her face away, reached out and grasped the hand of Ilya Grushenko.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE WAY, the humans decompressed their atmosphere until it approximated that of Zolotoy. There was enough oxygen to support lethargic movement, but they donned small compression pumps, capacitor-powered, worn on the back and feeding to a nose-piece. Their starved lungs expanded gratefully. Otherwise they dressed in winter field uniforms and combat helmets. But when Ekaterina reached for her pistol, Grushenko took it from her.

"Would you conquer them with this, Comrade Saburov?" he asked.

She flushed. Her words came muffled through the tenuous air: "It might give us a chance to break free, if we must escape."

"They could overhaul this boat in ten seconds. And . . . escape where? To interstellar space again? I say here we stop, live or die. Even from here, it will be a weary way to Earth."

"Forget about Earth," said Holbrook out of tautness and despair. "No one is returning to Earth before Novaya is strong enough to stand off a Soviet fleet. Maybe you like to wear the Party's collar. I don't!"

Ekaterina regarded him for a long time. Even through the dehumanizing helmet and nose-piece, he found her beautiful. She replied: "What kind of freedom is it to become the client state of an almighty Zolotoy? The Soviet overlords are at least human."

"Watch your language, Comrade Saburov!" snapped Grushenko.

They fell back into silence. Holbrook thought that she had pierced him again. For surely it was true, men could never be free in the shadow of gods. Even the most benign of super-creatures would breed fear and envy and hatred, by their mere incomprehensible existence; and a society riddled with such disease must soon spew up tyrants. No, better to flee while they had a chance,

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if they still did at all. But how much longer could they endure that devil's voyage?

The linked vessels fell downward on micrometrically controlled blasts. When a landing was finally made, it was so smooth that for a moment Holbrook did not realize he was on Zolotoy.

Then he unbuckled himself, went to the airlock controls and opened the boat. His eardrums popped as pressures equalized; he stepped out into a still, cold air, under a deep violet sky and a shrunken sun. The low gravity made it wholly dreamlike.

Unthinkingly, the three humans moved close together. They looked down kilometers of glass-slick blackness. A spaceship was landing far off; machines rolled up to attend it, but otherwise there was no sign of life. Yet the emptiness did not suggest decay. Holbrook thought again of the bustle around a Terrestrial airport. It seemed grubby beside this immense quietude.

The spacefield reached almost to the near horizon. At one end clustered several towers. They must be two kilometers high, thought Holbrook in the depths of an overwhelmed brain: half a dozen titanic leaps of metal, but blended into a harmony which caught at his heart.

"There!"

He turned around. The Zolotoyans were approaching.

THERE were ten of them, riding on two small platforms: the propulsive system was not clear, and Holbrook's engineer's mind speculated about magnetic-field drives. They stood up, so rigid that not until the flying things had grounded and the creatures disembarked could the humans be quite sure they were alive.

There was about them the same chill beauty as their city bore. Two and a half meters tall they stood, and half of it was lean narrow-footed legs. Their chests and shoulders tapered smoothly, the arms were almost cylindrical but ended in eerily manlike hands. Above slender necks poised smooth, mask-faced heads—a single slit nostril, delicately lipped mouths immobile above narrow chins, fluted ears, long amber eyes with horizontal pupils. Their skins were a dusky hairless purple. They were clad identically, in form-fitting black; they carried vaguely rifle-like tubes, the blast-guns Holbrook remembered.

He thought between thunders: *Why? Why should they ignore us for months, and then attack us so savagely when we dared to look at them, and then fail to pursue us or even search for our camp?*

What are they going to do now?

Grushenko stepped forward. "Comrades," he said, holding up

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his hands. His voice came as if from far away; the bare black spaces ate it down, and Holbrook saw how a harshly suppressed fear glistened on the Ukrainian's skin. But Grushenko pointed to himself. "Man," he said. He pointed to the sky. "From the stars."

One of the Zolotoyans trilled a few notes. But it was at the others he (?) looked. A gun prodded Holbrook's back.

Ekaterina said with a stiff smile: "They are not in a conversational mood, Ilya Feodorovitch. Or perhaps only the commissar of interstellar relations is allowed to speak with us."

Hands closed on Holbrook's shoulders. He was pushed along, not violently but with firmness. He mounted one of the platforms. The others followed him. They rose without sound into the air. Looking back, Holbrook saw no one, no thing, on all the fused darkness of the spaceport, except the machines unloading the other ship and a few Zolotoyans casually departing from it. And, yes, the craft which had borne down the Terrestrial boat were being trundled off, leaving the boat itself unattended.

"Have they not even put a guard on our vessel?" choked Ekaterina.

Grushenko shrugged. "Why should they? In a civilization this advanced there are no thieves, no vandals, no spies."

"But . . ." Holbrook weighed his words. "Look, though. If an alien ship landed on your front step, wouldn't you at least be curious about it?"

"They may have a commissar of curiosity," said Ekaterina slyly. *Her humor shows up at the damnedest times!* thought Holbrook.

Grushenko gave her a hard glance. "How can you be sure, comrades, they do not already know everything about us?" he answered.

Ekaterina shook her blonde head. "Be careful, comrade. I happen to know that speculations about telepathy are classified as bourgeois subjectivism."

Did she actually grin as she spoke? Holbrook, unable to share her gallows mirth, lost his question, for now he was flying among the towers, and so into the city beyond.

There was no Earth language for what he saw: soaring many-colored pride, hundreds of meters skyward, stretching farther than his eyes reached. Looped between the clean heights were elevated roadways; he saw pedestrian traffic on them, Zolotoyans in red and blue and green and white as well as black. There seemed to be association between the uniform and the physical appearance: the reds were shorter and more muscular, the greens

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had outsize heads—but he could not be sure, in his few bewildered glimpses. Down below were smaller buildings, domes or more esoteric curves, and a steady flow of noiseless traffic.

"How many of them are there?" he whispered.

"Billions, I should think." Ekaterina laid a chilled hand on his. Her hazel eyes were stretched open with a sort of terror. "But it is so still!"

Great blue-white flashes of energy went between kilometer-high spires. Now and then a musical symbol quivered over the metal reaches of the city. But no one spoke. There was no loitering, no hesitation, no disorder, such as even the most sovietized city of Earth would know.

Grushenko shook his head. "I wonder if we can even speak with them," he admitted in a lost voice. "What does a dog have to say to a man?" Then, straightening himself: "But we are going to try!"

At the end of a long flight, they landed on a flange, dizzyingly far above the street (?). Watching Zolotoyan hands on the platform controls, Holbrook found the steering mechanism superbly simple. But then he was urged through an arched doorway and down a dim corridor of polished blue stone. He saw faint grooves worn in the floor. This place was *old*.

Ekaterina whispered to him, "Eben Petrovitch,"—she had never so called him before—"have you seen even one ornament here? One little picture or calendar or . . . anything? I would give a tooth for something humanly small."

"The city is its own ornament," said Grushenko. His words came louder than required.

They reached a dead-end wall. One of the black figures touched a stud, and the wall dilated.

Beyond was a room so large that Holbrook could not make out its ceiling through the sourceless muted radiance. But he saw the machine that waited, tier upon tier where tiny red lights crawled like worms, and he saw a hundred silent green-clad Zolotoyans move through the intricate rituals of servicing it. "A computer," he mumbled. "In ten thousand years *we* may be able to build a computer like that."

A guard trilled to a technician. The technician waved calmly at some others, who hurried to him. They conferred in a few syllables and turned to the humans with evident purpose.

"Gospodny pomiluie," breathed Ekaterina. "It is a . . . a routine! How many like us have come here?"

Holbrook felt himself shoved onto a metal plate in the floor. He braced himself for death, for enlightenment, for God. But the

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machine only blinked and muttered. A technician stepped up with an instrument, touched it to Holbrook's neck, and withdrew an unfelt few cubic centimeters of blood. He bore it off into twilight. Holbrook waited.

The machine spoke. It was hard to tell its voice from the sweet Zolotoyan trills. The guards leveled their guns. Holbrook gasped and ran toward Ekaterina. Two black giants caught and held him.

"By heaven," he found himself howling, foolish and futile melodrama in the twilight, "if you touch her, you bastards—!"

"Wait, Eben Petrovitch," she called. "We can only wait."

Hands felt over his garments. An instrument buzzed. A Zolotoyan reached into Holbrook's pocket and took out a jack-knife. His watch was pulled off his wrist, the helmet off his head. "Judas priest," he exclaimed, "we're being frisked!"

"Potential weapons are being removed," said Grushenko.

"You mean they don't bother to look at our spaceship, but can't tell a watch isn't a deadly weapon —hey!" Holbrook grabbed at a hand which fumbled with his air compressor.

"Submit," said Grushenko. "We can survive without the apparatus." He began to point at objects, naming them. He was ignored.

CHAPTER V

BEYOND the chamber was another hall, and at its end was another room. It was a small, bare, windowless cell of the same blue stone. Dull light came from the walls themselves, a waste-disposal hole opened downward, a porous circle in the ceiling breathed fresh air. Otherwise the place was featureless. When the black guards had urged the humans through and the dilated wall had returned to a blank barrier, they were alone.

They felt drained and lightheaded in the thin atmosphere. Its dryness caught at their throats and its cold gnawed toward their bones. But most terrible, perhaps, was the silence.

Holbrook said at last, for them all: "Now what?"

Unhelmeted, Ekaterina's sunlight-colored hair seemed to crackle with frost. Suddenly his living universe had narrowed to her—though he could do worse, he thought in the dimness—with Grushenko hovering on its fringes. Beyond, mystery; the stone walls enclosed him like the curvature of space. The woman said with a forlorn boldness, the breath smoking from her lips, "I suppose they will feed us. Else it would have been most logical just to shoot us. But they do not seem to care if we die of pneumonia."

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"Can we eat their food?" muttered Holbrook. "The odds are against it, I'd say. Too many incompatible proteins. The fact we can live on Novaya is nearly a miracle, and Zolotoy isn't that Earthlike."

"They are not stupid," snorted Grushenko. "On the basis of our blood samples they can synthesize an adequate diet for us."

"And yet they took our metallic possessions—even the most harmless." Ekaterina sat down, shivering. "And that computer, did it not give them orders? Is the computer the most powerful brain on this planet?"

"No." Holbrook joined her on the floor. Oxygen lack slowed his thoughts, but he plowed doggedly toward an idea. "No, I don't believe in robots with creative minds. That's what intelligence itself is for. You wouldn't build a machine to eat for you, or . . . or make love . . . or any truly human function. Machines are to help, to amplify, to supplement. That thing is a gigantic memory bank, a symbolic logic manipulator, what you like; but it is not a personality."

"But then why did they *obey* it?" she cried.

Grushenko smiled wearily. "I suppose a clever dog might wonder why a man obeys his slide rule," he said.

"A good enough analogy," said Holbrook. "Here's my guess. It's obvious the Zolotoyans have been civilized for a very long time. So I imagine they visited all the nearer stars . . . ages ago, maybe. They took data home with them. That computer is, as Ekaterina said a few hundred years back, the commissar of interstellar relations. It has all the data. It identifies us, our home planet—"

"Yes, of course!" exclaimed Grushenko. "At this moment, the rulers of Zolotoy—whatever they have, perhaps the entire population—they are studying the report on us!"

Ekaterina closed her eyes. "And what will they decide?" she asked in a dead voice.

"They will send someone to learn our language, or teach us theirs," said Grushenko. A lift of excitement came to him, he paced up and down, his boots clacked on the floor and his face became a harsh mask of will. "Yes. The attack on us at the mine was a mistake of some kind. We must assume that, comrades, because if it was not we are certainly doomed. Now we have a chance to reason with them. And they can restore the rightful captaincy to the *Rurik*!"

Holbrook looked up, startled. After a moment: "What makes you so sure they will?"

"There is much we can offer them—it may be necessary to conceal certain elements, in the interests of the larger truth, but—"

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"Do you expect to fool a superman?"

"I can try," said Grushenko simply. "Assuming that there is any need to. Actually, I think they are sure to favor the Red side. Marxist principles would seem to predict that much. However . . ."

A minute longer he rubbed his jaw, pondering. Then he planted himself, big and heavy, in front of Holbrook. He looked down from his height and snapped: "I will be the only one who talks to them. Do you understand?"

The American stood up. The motion made his head swim. But he cocked his fists and said in anger, "Just how do you expect to prevent me . . . comrade?"

"I am the better linguist," said Grushenko. "I am sure to be talking to them while you still flounder about trying to tell the syllables apart. But there are two sovietists here. Between us we can forbid you even to attempt it."

Holbrook stared at the woman. She rose too, but backed away. One hand lifted to her mouth. "Ilya Feodorovitch," she whispered. "We are three human creatures."

"Comrade Saburov," said Grushenko in an iron tone, "I make this a test of your loyalty. If you wish to commit treason, now is your time."

Her gaze was wild upon Holbrook. He saw the tides of blood go through her skin, until they drained and she stood white and somehow empty.

"Yes," she said. "Yes, comrade."

"Good." Warmth flowed into the deep voice. Grushenko laid his hands upon her shoulders, searched her eyes, suddenly embraced her. "Thank you, Ekaterina Ivanovna!" He stepped back, and Holbrook saw the heavy hairless face blush like a boy's. "Not for what you do," breathed Grushenko. "For what you are."

She stood quiet a long time. Finally she looked at Holbrook with eyes gone cat-green and said like a mechanism: "You understand you will keep yourself in the background, say nothing and make no untoward gestures. If necessary, we two can kill you with our hands."

And then suddenly she went to a corner, sat down and hugged her knees and buried her face against them.

HOLBROOK lowered himself. His heart thuttered, wild for oxygen; he felt the cold strike into his throat. He had not been so close to weeping since the hour his mother died.

But—

He avoided Grushenko's hooded stare; he retreated into himself and buckled on the armor of an engineer's workaday soul. There were problems to solve;

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well, let them be solved, as practical problems in a practical universe. For even this nightmare planet was real. Even it made logical sense; it had to, if you could only see clearly.

He faced a mighty civilization, perhaps a million years old, which maintained interplanetary travel, giant computers, all the intricacies of a technology he did not begin to comprehend. But it ignored the unhidden human landings on Novaya. But it attacked senselessly when three strangers appeared—and then did not follow up the attack. It captured a space vessel with contemptuous ease, did not even bother to look at the booty, shoved the crew through an obviously cut-and-dried routine and then into this cell; but cosmos crack open, visitors from another star could not be an everyday affair! And it was understandable the Zolotoyans would remove a prisoner's knife, but why his watch? Well, maybe a watch could be turned into a, oh, a hyperspatial lever. Maybe they knew how to pull some such stunt and dared not assume the strangers were ignorant of it. But if so, why didn't they take some precautions with the outworld spaceship? Hell, it could be a nuclear time bomb, for all they knew—

The uniforms, the whole repulsive discipline, suggested a totalitarian state. Could the humans only have encountered a few dull-witted subordinates so far? That would fit the facts. . . . No, it wouldn't either. Because the overlords, who were not fools, would certainly have been informed of this, and would have taken immediate steps.

Or would they?

Holbrook gasped. "God in heaven!"

"What?" Grushenko trod over to him. "What is it?"

Holbrook struggled to his feet. "Look," he babbled, "we've got to break out of here. It's our death if we don't. The cold alone will kill us. And if we don't get back soon, the others will leave this system. I—"

"You will keep silent when the Zolotoyans arrive," said Grushenko. He raised a fist. "If they do plan to terminate us, we must face it. There is nothing we can do about it."

"But there is, I tell you! We can! Listen—"

The wall dilated.

CHAPTER VI

THREE GUARDS stood shoulder to shoulder, their guns pointed inward, their lovely unhuman faces blank. A red-clad being, shorter than they, set down a bowl of stew and a container of water. The food was unidentifiable, but its odor was savory.

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Holbrook felt sure it had been manufactured for the Terrestrials.

"For the zoo!" he said aloud. And then, wildly: "No, for the filing cabinet. File and forget. Lock us up and throw away the key because *there is nothing else they can do with us.*"

Ekaterina caught his arm. "Back," she warned.

Grushenko stood making gestures and talking, under the golden eyes of the guards. They loomed over him like idols from some unimaginable futurism. And suddenly the hatred which seethed in Holbrook left him; he knew nothing but pity. He mourned for Zolotoy the damned, which had once been so full of hope.

But he must live. His eyes turned to Ekaterina. He heard the frosty breath rattle in her nostrils. Already the coryza viruses in her bloodstream were multiplying; chill and oxygen starvation had weakened her. Fever would come within hours, death within weeks. And Grushenko would spend weeks trying to communicate. Or if he could be talked around to Holbrook's beliefs, it might be too late: that electronic idiot-savant might decide at any moment that the prisoners were safest if killed—

"I'm sorry," said Holbrook. He punched Ekaterina in the stomach.

She lurched and sat down. Holbrook side-stepped the red Zolotoyan, moved in under the guards, and seized a blast-gun with both hands. He brought up his foot in the same motion, against a bony black-clad knee, and heaved.

The Zolotoyan reeled. Holbrook staggered back, the gun in his hands. The other two guards trilled and slewed their own weapons about. Holbrook whipped the blaster up and squeezed its single switch. Lightning crashed between blue walls.

A signal hooted. Automatic alarms—there would be guards coming, swarming all over, and their only reaction was to kill. "The computer!" bawled Holbrook. "We've got to get the computer!" Two hideously charred bodies were collapsing. The stench of burnt flesh grabbed his gullet.

"You murdering fool!" Grushenko roared it out, leaping at him. Holbrook reversed his blaster and struck with the butt. Grushenko fell to the floor, dazed. The third black Zolotoyan fumbled after a dropped gun. Holbrook destroyed him.

"The computer," he shouted. "It's not a brain, only an automation." He reached down, caught Ekaterina by the wrist and hauled her up. His heart seemed about to burst; rags of darkness swirled before his eyes. "But it *is* the interstellar commissar," he

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groaned. "It's the only thing able to decide about us . . . and now it's sure to decide on killing—"

"You're insane!" shrieked the woman, from light-years away. She clawed after his weapon. He swayed in black mists, batted her away with his own strengthless hands.

"I haven't time now," he whispered. "I love you. Will you come with me?"

He turned and staggered through the door, past the scuttering red servitor, over the corpses and into the hall. The siren squealed before him, around him, through him. His feet were leaden clogs; Christ, what had become of the low gravity—*help me, help me.*

Hands caught his arm. "Lean on me, Eben Petrovitch," she said.

They went down a vaulted corridor full of howling. His temples beat, as if his brain were trying to escape the skull, but vision cleared a little. He saw the wall at the end. He stopped by the control stud.

"Let me go through first," he said in his burning throat. "If the guards get me, remember the computer must be destroyed. We're safe if it can be destroyed. Wait, now."

The wall gaped for him. He stepped through. The green technicians moved serenely under the huge machine, servicing it as if he did not exist. *In a way,* he thought, *I don't.* He sped across the floor. His boots resounded hollowly on the stone. He came up to the machine and opened fire.

Thunder roared in the chamber. The technicians twittered and ran around him. One of them posted himself at a board whose pattern of signaling lights was too intricate for men to grasp, and called out orders. The others began to fetch replacement parts. And the siren yammered. It was like no alarm on Earth; its voice seemed almost alive.

Four guards burst in from the outer hall. Holbrook sprang behind a technician, who kept stolidly by his rank of levers. The guards halted, stared around, and began to cast about like sniffing dogs. Holbrook shot past the green Zolotoyan, dropped one, dropped two. A human would have sacrificed the enemy's living shield to get at the enemy; but no black had ever fired on a green. Another guard approached and was killed. But where had the fourth gotten to?

Holbrook heard the noise and whirled about. The gaunt shape had been almost upon him, from the rear. Ekaterina had attacked. They rolled about the floor, she snarling, he with a remote godlike calm even as he wrestled. He got her by the throat. Holbrook ran up behind and clubbed his

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blaster. After more blows than a man could have survived, the guard slumped.

The woman crawled from beneath, gasping. Holbrook's strength was fled, his lungs one enormous agony. He sank to the floor beside her. "Are you all right?" he forced. "Are you hurt, my dearest?"

"Hold."

They crouched side by side and turned faces which bled from the nose back toward the machine. Ilya Grushenko stood there. A blaster was poised in his hands. "Drop your gun or I shoot," he said. "You and her both."

Holbrook's fingers went slack. He heard the remote clatter of his weapon as it struck stone.

"Thank you, Eben Petrovitch," said Grushenko. "Now they have it proven to them which of our factions is their friend."

"You don't understand!" choked Holbrook. "Listen to me!"

"Be still. Raise your hands. Ah, there—" Grushenko flicked eyes toward a pair of guards trotting into the room. "I have them, comrades!" he whooped.

Their fire converged on him. He ceased to be.

Holbrook had already scooped up his own blaster. He shot down the two black Zolotoyans. He stood up, swaying and still scrabbling after air. Ekaterina huddled at his feet. "You see," he said wearily, "we are in the ultimate collectivist state." She clung to his knees and wept.

He had not fired many bolts into the computer when its siren went quiet. He assumed that the orders it had been giving were thereby canceled. He took the woman and they walked away from the pathetically scurrying greens, out into the hallway, past a few guards who ignored them, and so to a flying platform.

CHAPTER VII

UNDER the tall fair heaven of Novaya, Holbrook spoke to the chief of the human outpost. "You can call them back from the *Rurik*," he said. "There is no more danger."

"But what are the Zolotoyans?" asked Ximénez. His eyes went in fear toward the mountains. "If they are not intelligent beings, then who . . . what . . . created their civilization?"

"Their ancestors," said Holbrook. "A very long time ago. They were great once. But they ended up with a totalitarian government. A place for everyone and everyone in his place. The holy society, whose very stasis was holy. Specialized breeds for the different jobs. Some crude attempts at it have been made on Earth, too. Egypt didn't change for thousands of years after the pyramids had been built. Diocle-

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tian, the Roman emperor, made all occupations hereditary. The Soviets are trying that sort of thing at this moment, if they haven't been overthrown since we left. The Zolotoyans were unlucky: their attempt succeeded."

He shrugged. "When one individual is made exactly like another — when independent thought is no longer needed, is actually forbidden—what do you expect? Evolution gets rid of organs which have stopped being useful. That includes the thinking brain."

"But all that you saw—space travel, police functions, chemical analysis and synthesis, maintaining those wonderful machines—it is all done by instinct?" protested Ximénez. "No, I cannot believe it!"

"Instinct isn't completely rigid, you know," said Holbrook. "Even a simple one-loop homeostatic circuit is amazingly flexible and adaptive. Remember ants or bees or termites on Earth. In their own way, they have societies as intricate as anything known to me. They even have a sort of stylized language, as do our neighbors here. Actually, I suspect the average ant faces more variety and challenge in his life than does the ordinary Zolotoyan. Remember, they have no natural enemies any more; and for tens of thousands of years, all the jobs on that highly automated planet have been stereotyped.

"The mine guards on Novaya ignored our rocket trails beyond the mountains because—oh, to their perception it couldn't have been very different from lightning, say. But they had long ago evolved an instinct to shoot at unknown visitors, simply because large Novayan animals could interfere with operations. At home, they have little or no occasion to fight. But apparently they, like the green technicians, have an inborn obedience to the computer signals."

"Yes," said Ximénez. "The computer, what was it?"

Holbrook sighed. "I suppose it was built in the last dying age of reason. Some atavistic genius (how lonely he must have been!) realized what was happening. Sooner or later, visitors from space were sure to arrive. He wanted to give his descendants at least a little defense against them. He built that machine, which could try to identify them, could give a few simple orders about their disarmament and care and feeding, that sort of thing. He used some controlled-mutation process to breed the technicians that serviced it, and the obedience of the guards. Or perhaps it was enough to institute a set of laws. There'd be natural selection toward an instinct. . . . It really wasn't much he could do. A poor, clumsy protection

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against diseases we might have carried, or wanton looting, or . . ."

Holbrook lifted his face into the wind. Sunlight streamed through summer leaves, it fell like a benediction on him and on the young woman who held his hand. Now, when the technical problem was disposed of, his voice came more slowly and awkwardly:

"I could pity the Zolotoyans, except that they're beyond it. They are as empty of selfhood as insects. But the one who built the computer, can't you almost hear him back in time, asking for our mercy?"

Ximénez nodded. "Well," he said, "I do not see why we should not let the . . . fauna . . . live. We can learn a great deal from them."

"Including this:" said Holbrook, "that it shall not happen to our race. We've a planet now, and a whole new science to master. Our children or our grandchildren will return to Earth."

Ekaterina's hand released his, but her arm went about his waist, drawing him close as if he were a shield. Her eyes ranged the great strange horizon and she asked, very low, "After all that time here, do you think they will care about Earth?"

"I don't know," said Holbrook. He tasted the light like rain on his uplifted face. It was not the sun he remembered. "I don't know, dearest. I don't even know if it matters."

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DON'T SHOOT THE NEWSDEALER!

The newsstand distribution picture is improving, but there are still places where INFINITY doesn't go on sale regularly. It isn't the dealers' fault; naturally, they want to sell the magazines you want to buy. But distribution is a complicated chain, and it takes time to eliminate all the weak links.

So if you're having trouble buying INFINITY, there are two things you can do:

1. Let us know about it. Tell us the name and address of your local newsstand, and we'll see that it receives a supply of copies of every issue.

2. Subscribe. Send $3.50 for 12 issues ($4.50 if you live outside the U. S., its territories and possessions, or Canada) to the Subscription Department, Royal Publications, Inc., 11 West 42nd Street, New York 36, N. Y. You'll receive your copies by mail, prior to the newsstand on-sale date.

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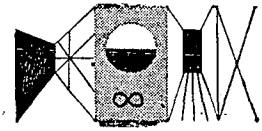
Infinity's Choice



by DAMON KNIGHT

THE INFINITY AWARDS

WHEN you read this, six plaques, the Infinity Awards for 1957, will have been sent to the authors of four books. (There are six awards this year, because one of the books was written by three people.)

These awards are to be given annually, as an expression of our gratitude to writers—the people who give this field its reason for being, and who alone make it interesting to work in.

We also hope the awards will help draw attention to what we consider to be the best books of the year; and by promoting their sale and resale, help the authors earn more money.

Book- (and author-) burning is one extreme of criticism; large and valuable gifts are the other. We believe it is the responsibility of any magazine which practices criticism, to go as far in both directions as it decently can.

BEST NOVEL

Choosing one novel from the best of 1957 was not easy; there were half a dozen good books, each with its own highly individual merits. Anyone of them could be called "the best," depending on which quality you chose to regard as most important. INFINITY's choice was not made without painful effort.

The novel award goes to:

FIRST ON MARS
by Rex Gordon
(Ace Books)

The novel begins with deceptive casualness, as the story of an unauthorized Mars ship tinkered up by a bunch of British rocket scientists in the Australian desert. Except for its quiet sense of pace, and the expert handling of details, this might be taken for just one more pseudo-American space adventure, of which the Britons produce so many.

The central situation has been used before—one man marooned alone on Mars—and it's natural to suppose that nothing in it can be any real surprise. Again and again, Gordon builds up a plot movement which is straight from stock, and you know perfectly well what's going to happen: and

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then he surprises you, not by elaborate trickery, but by showing you that you never understood the situation fully before.

Unlike Bradbury's Mars, C. S. Lewis' or Edgar Rice Burroughs', Gordon's Mars conforms to the picture of that planet which astronomers see as most likely: an arid wasteland, with an atmosphere about as thin as that at the top of Everest. Gordon makes this picture come alive as no one else has; the ingenuity of his hero in finding ways of surviving, impeccably handled as it is, is relatively unimportant. Gordon gives you Mars, solid and clear: it is really there; you can see it and feel it.

Dozens of rash people have tried unsuccessfully to define science fiction, but I will stick my neck out: Science fiction is that fiction which speculates about the unknown, using the data and principles established by science.

This is offered as a central definition, not as an all-inclusive one. Many sf writers go through very similar motions for very different purposes. Some not only do not use the data or principles of science, but seem proud of being able to leave them out, like nutburger chefs in a vegetarian restaurant.

But I think the kind of science fiction that does use them, rare as it is, is the staple of our diet, the thing we are really looking for.

This novel is the pure article.

Every stage in Gordon's plot is strictly logical, and elegantly argued for: and it is with these careful, almost plodding accretions of background that he builds his moments of sheer excitement —horror, hope, wonder—all striking past your guard because they are not phony, not contrived but organic parts of the story.

This is a basic science fiction book, written sixty years later than it might have been—not the latest in a long series of first-man-on-Mars books, but a true prototype: exactly the kind of book H. G. Wells might have written.

BEST SHORT STORY COLLECTION

Good books in this category were not in oversupply last year. Short story collections are much harder to sell than novels, and few are published simply because they are good. Many of those which did appear in 1957 were published to fill schedules, or as bonuses to the authors, or for other more or less irrelevant reasons.

The award goes to:

THE THIRD LEVEL
by Jack Finney
(Rinehart & Company, Inc.)

Finney's specialty is time travel, a subject which in his hands has rich overtones of nostalgia and fear. While some writers have made a time machine as prosaic as the 5:40 to Scarsdale, Finney re-invests it with all the strangeness and wonder that properly

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belong to it. These are haunting stories, especially "The Third Level," "I'm Scared," "There Is a Tide . . ." and "Second Chance."

BEST SCIENCE BOOK

The giant in this category, in 1957 as in seven previous publication years, was:

ROCKETS, MISSILES AND SPACE TRAVEL
by Willy Ley
(The Viking Press)

Ley's book on rocketry is not only large (the new edition runs to 528 pages), complete, and painstakingly accurate, but is written in a disarmingly simple, open, comprehensible style.

SPECIAL AWARD OF MERIT: NOVELLA COLLECTION

This category is even more restricted, and recognition, in our view, even more urgent. The award goes to:

SOMETIME, NEVER
by William Golding, John Wyndham and Mervyn Peake
(Ballantine Books, Inc.)

This trio of long novelettes assembled by Ballantine is a stunning performance—three perfectly controlled excursions, one into an imaginary past, one into a possible future, and one into the realm of pure fantasy. All three authors—like Rex Gordon—are British.

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Several months ago, I sent a questionnaire to the editors of twenty-six publishing houses. I wanted to find out if the recent increase in the number of new sf books, particularly in hard covers, meant we were in for another lunatic boom like that of 1950-55.

The first question was: "What are your plans for publishing science fiction?"

Of the hardcover editors who answered, nearly all denied that they had any. Gnome Press and Avalon publish a book a month each, like Ballantine and Ace in the paperbacks. (Avon publishes eight to twelve sf paperbacks a year, Bantam six, Signet five.) The other replies varied from the supercilious to the minutely helpful, but every one—even Doubleday's—disclaimed any set program. As Sam Wohl of Simon & Schuster wrote: "If we like a script, we do it." In most cases this does not happen very often: S&S has recently issued three volumes, after a long layoff; Rinehart has one on its 1958 list; Harcourt, Brace publishes Arthur C. Clarke and nobody else; Putnam's, after publishing James Blish's successful *Earthman, Come Home,* has no plans for publishing any more.

The second question was, "What do you feel you have learned as a result of your previous experiments in this field?"

Of those who replied, most

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hardcover editors said glumly that science fiction was not a very lucrative field. The one exception was Walter I. Bradbury of Doubleday, who wrote: "We show increasing trade sales of hard-bound science fiction books in the last few seasons."

Martin Greenberg of The Gnome Press, most successful of the small specialty houses, wrote that his juveniles outsell the adult novels, and that libraries and schools account for most of his sales.

The paperbacks are different: except for Dell First Editions, which has had little success with sf until the annual Merril collections, they all reported good and steady sales. "Despite publicity to the contrary," wrote Truman M. Talley of Signet, "science fiction has now, and has had, a steady audience—neither large nor small. This audience did not grow particularly during all the flap in 1952-53, nor has it diminished much since. We sell now, as we did then, 180,000-200,000 copies of a title—very seldom under, very seldom over."

In asking this question, I had hoped to find out whether any doubts of their own editorial practices had occurred to those trade editors who burned their fingers on science fiction during the boom. (For instance: "Can an editor who doesn't like science fiction tell a good sf novel from a bad one?") But if any such thinking has been taking place in editorial skulls, it was not confided in me.

The third and last question was, "What's wrong with most of the sf manuscripts you see?"

I half expected this question to provoke a few magnificent snorts of scorn from the anti-sf editors. I didn't get any, but I did get some very thoughtful and provocative comments from the other group. Joan Seidenman, promotion director at Ballantine, wrote: "The big step forward in sf came when the gadget gave way to the character as hero; the thing that happens in the poorer sf now is that characterization itself has become a formula kind of writing." I think this is startlingly apt, and hope writers will take notice. Truman M. Talley (Signet) is afraid sf writers tend to be too ingrown, forgetting the needs of the unsophisticated reader. "The early stories and themes have been done and are now considered clichés by the faithful: deep-sleep to Far Centaurus, nuclear dislocation—Blowups Happen, etc., etc. Yet now that more and more people are interested, but are new to the field, these themes seem less in evidence." I was fascinated by Talley's choice of "early stories," until I realized that, sure enough, more time has gone by since Robert A. Heinlein pioneered those ideas in the forties, than in all the

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previous history of magazine sf. Good heavens, how the years do pile up! . . . Knox Burger (Dell First Editions), an anti-man though a polite one, has this to say: "The level of talent among science-fiction writers is obviously higher than among other 'genre' writers, but it is seldom equal to the cataclysmic themes and subjects they choose to deal with. Wells, Stapledon, Orwell are not as good as Dickens, Tolstoy, Malraux from any standpoint (or so I think), but in view of their subjects, they needed to be colossal." And Sam Wohl (Simon & Schuster) adds: "We should also declare a moratorium on plastic, which continues to be regarded by an astonishing number of sf writers as the very last word in human invention. A high percentage of the scripts that we see are creaking melodramas (. . .) and the only new feature is the thick coating of servo-mechanisms, ray guns, tele-helmets, and, of course, plastic."

For me, the most interesting remark that came out of the survey was made by Alan D. Williams (Lippincott): "We've found that if we do not call a book science fiction we can sometimes come out in the black."

Lippincott was the publisher in 1956 of Frank M. Robinson's highly successful *The Power*. It was science fiction, but the jacket did not say so; it was labeled "A Novel of Menace." According to Williams, the company has contracted for three more science fiction novels, by Richard Matheson, Walter M. Miller, Jr. (the Leibowitz series from *F&SF*) and Charles Eric Maine. None will be published as science fiction; the Miller book, says Williams, "will be published and promoted as a straight novel."

Here we have something to mull over long and hard. When "science fiction" first became a part of the national vocabulary, about seven years ago, I for one was surprised and pleased. In the old days, if you told anybody you read or wrote science fiction, you always had to explain it. Newspaper reviewers called it "pseudo-science," or "Buck Rogers stuff," or even "space opera," but not "science fiction"—the term simply didn't exist.

Now look. The term exists, all right, and what it means to most people is: "hack fiction, written to formula like the Westerns, with rayguns and spaceships instead of cattle and sixguns." With exasperating irony, it has come about that the public understands by "science fiction" exactly, to the letter, what we understand by "bad science fiction." The circle is closed: we can't talk to outsiders about "good science fiction," because it is a contradiction in terms.

In the book trade, at the same

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time, "science fiction" has become a narrow category, usually excluding merit, but in any case strictly a term of convenience which can contain, or fail to contain, the damnedest things. Nevil Shute's *On the Beach* was not science fiction to the trade, although it took place in the future and described an imaginary world cataclysm. The book's subject has nothing to do with it: it was not science fiction *because* it was a best-selling novel by a popular author. Again, Miss Ada Vapnek of Scribner's wrote me that "we will be unable to help you since Scribner's does not publish science fiction." And it is true; they don't—they do, however, publish the juveniles of Robert A. Heinlein, all of which happen to be laid in the future.

Williams' solution to this problem, though it jolted me, seems both brilliant and sensible. If we can't sell it as "science fiction," then by all means let's call it something else.

I suppose there is a danger that fact and logic may be neglected by editors who get used to thinking of sf books as "novels of menace" or "suspense novels," but this has been happening ninety per cent of the time anyhow.

No, apparently there is not going to be another wide-open science fiction boom. What I hope to see happening next is more in the nature of a silent revolution: more and more sf novelists working for the general book public, rather than for the specialists alone. Science fiction writers, unite —you have nothing to lose but your labels!

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HENRY KUTTNER died of a heart attack on February 4, 1958. He was 43.

One of the most talented and versatile writers in science fiction, Kuttner produced some hundred and fifty sf stories, alone or in collaboration, between 1937 and 1950. He also wrote prolifically for the weird and adventure-story markets, and was the author of several detective novels. He wrote some things that will last.

He is survived by his wife, C. L. Moore, with whom many of his best stories were written.

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ROUNDUP TIME AGAIN

(*Continued from page 4*)

laboring hard to make sure that all guests will have an entertaining, informative, and memorable time—and one that won't cost too much, to boot.

It's far from too early to send your dollar for membership to the Solacon treasurer, Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana Street, South Gate, California. And if you're sure you will be there, send your reservation for a room at the convention hotel, the Alexandria, to Secretary Len Moffatt, 10202 Belcher, Downey, California.

THIS YEAR, as noted on page 94, there are six INFINITY Awards, being given to the authors of four outstanding books. This will be an annual event, and in the future, if there is more competition in other possible categories (anthologies, for instance), the number of awards will be larger. Meanwhile, I'd be very grateful for your reactions and suggestions. Do you like the idea? Are you satisfied with the way we've handled it? Any other comments?

Naturally, if you have any nominations for the 1958 awards, we'll be glad to receive them. Judging won't take place until after the first of the year, of course, but some strong contenders have already been published, and if you want to make note of them now, go right ahead.

INCIDENTALLY, the bi-monthly schedule will not mean a complete lack of the novels which many of you seem to prefer to shorter fiction. I'll continue to consider stories of all lengths for publication. After "Recalled to Life," I'll run no serials until we can bring the magazine out more often again, but if an outstanding book-lengther comes in, I'll publish it complete in one issue. Meanwhile, I have a couple of very fine novelets on hand; you'll be seeing them in about four months.

I'm curious, though: will anyone with a strong preference for shorter stories let me know about it? There's a time-honored tradition in the field that a lot of readers hate serials, but Richard Wilson's "And Then the Town Took Off" proved to be one of the most popular things INFINITY has ever printed, and I received a total of *no* complaints about the running of serials as such. And while the entire magazine field is in a slump these days, paperback books seem to be selling better than ever. I'm really interested; what are your views?—LTS

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PANGBORN'S PARADOX

By DAVID MASON

So you know all the punchlines to the old kill-your-own-grandfather gag, eh? Wanna bet?

Illustrated by RICHARD KLUGA

"TEMPORAL PARADOXES," Pangborn said, in that extra-stuffy tone he used when he wanted to give us an adequate idea of his superiority, "are not to be regarded as inconsistencies per se."

"Why not?" demanded Doctor Randall's voice from the depth of his wing chair. All we had been able to see of him for the past half-hour had been his legs, but apparently Pangborn's tone had been too much. "Prove it!"

Pangborn's tone became even more lofty. "My own theory is that such paradoxes, if reduced to practice, would prove not to be paradoxical at all."

"Such as the famous idea about going back and killing one's grandparents?" Von Juntz asked, stroking his beard.

We all like to have our little oddities on the faculty at Miskatonic. Von Juntz liked to look like a nineteenth century Heidelberger. Pangborn of Physics liked to assume a personality pattern that would annoy people. Doctor Randall of the Department of Advertising Arts wrote poetry in secret. And I liked to drink. . . .

"Problem of killing grand-

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parents before parents were born," I said, pouring myself another. "Question if you can be born after that. Question if you can't be born, how did you do it? Not really possible, Pangborn. You can't test it." I made a mental note to bring up the low quality of Faculty Club whiskey at the next business meeting. It had everything else a good faculty club should have: brown leather armchairs, old magazines, fresh newspapers, a dusty chess board, cut glass decanters . . . it was a place well suited for comfortable reading, talking and drinking—except for the quality of the whiskey.

"Can't kill grandpa," Doctor Randall said, from far down in his comfortable chair. "No such thing as time travel."

"You underestimate the Physics department," Pangborn told us coldly. "In spite of heavy losses to our staff—last year's treason trials cost us three of our most brilliant young men—we've made some very remarkable strides. We have what is crudely termed a time machine—although the correct term is temporal transducer. In fact we are currently conducting some very interesting researches with it."

"Then you have tried the killing of a grandfather, Herr Doctor?" Von Juntz inquired. "You have found why it cannot be done, yes?"

"We have not yet gotten around to such minor matters," Pangborn said. "But in time . . ." He began to look interested, "Ah . . . wait a minute. . . . In practice that would be. . . . Whose grandfather should we choose?" His eyes glittered. "There is always the question of risk, of course, but it would be difficult for the law to legally consider it as actually murder. My grandfather is already dead." He hesitated. "There is the possibility of disappearing."

"But," Von Juntz reminded him, "by your own statement you said it, that there is no paradox, and no risk. Grandpa would be dead, you would be alive, and there is no paradox, yes?"

"Q. E. D." Pangborn snapped. "Reduction ad absorbum."

"Et pons asinorum," Von Juntz snapped back, his beard bristling.

These exchanges would have been ever so much better if any of us had ever taken Latin. But I could see that Pangborn was ruffled.

"Very well." He bit off the words. "We'll do it."

"Whose grandfather?" asked Doctor Randall.

Pangborn's eyes glittered. "Mine, naturally. I wouldn't want to endanger any of you gentlemen. After all, it is my demonstration. I remember my grandfather jabbing me in the

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belly with a great horny finger when I was too young to defend myself. Giddygiddy, he used to say, the old buzzard. Died naturally. Apoplexy with a fan dancer it was, in a hotel room at the age of ninety-three. Disgraceful. Nobody ever shot him. Don't understand why not. Long overdue." Pangborn rubbed his hands together and started for the door. "How about it? Will you gentlemen accompany me to the Physics department?"

On the way over Randall nudged me and spoke out of the side of his mouth.

"Three to one Pangborn vanishes."

It seemed like good odds. If Pangborn managed to prevent his father from being born, logically he should prevent himself from being born. But I couldn't visualize him vanishing. Common sense was against it. "I'll cover that." I gave Randall three dollars.

If Pangborn did not vanish, Randall would owe me nine. If Pangborn did not vanish I would be disappointed, and money would be some consolation.

Pangborn passed us through the security guards and into the Physics laboratories. No need to describe the temporal transducer, it looked like the usual thing in gadgets—coils, tubes, pipes, condensers, wires, tubes—with a little screen overhead that lets the operator, who stays behind, watch what is happening to his passenger. Pangborn was extremely proud of it. He showed us all over the machine, pointing and naming every part. Von Juntz got his beard caught in a control wheel.

That made Pangborn almost good-natured.

Then he wanted to choose someone to operate the machine for him. He said my hands shook too much, and Von Juntz would not allow his beard to get within five feet of the controls, so we steadied Doctor Randall against a safety railing and instructed him how to operate the machine. Pangborn set the dials.

"There's one place where I'm certain to find Grandfather any time between 1893 and 1906," Pangborn told us. "The Andrew Jackson Saloon Bar on Decatur Street. He spent a lot of time there. Used it for his office they tell me. He was a lawyer. I've set the machine for there, for the month of Sptember 1896. A good month to die in. Ha!" Pangborn ostentatiously checked the cylinders of a huge antique revolver.

"Forty-five caliber," Pangborn said grimly. "Poke me, will he? Ha!"

And he climbed into the machine.

All of us crowded around the screen, Von Juntz carefully holding his beard. We saw the picture

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forming, the cut glass and bright gas lamps and polished wood of the Saloon Bar.

"*Four* to one Pangborn vanishes," Randall said suddenly, "Any takers, speak now."

I reached for my wallet.

Von Juntz said, "If he vanishes, it will be because he was never born. And if he was never born, you won't remember taking bets on him."

"Here," I said hastily to Randall, "I gave you some already. I'll hold my money, hand it back."

Randall withdrew a little. "Don't you trust me?" he asked in a hurt one. "I'll pay you if he doesn't vanish."

"Shhh," Von Juntz said. We crowded around the screen again.

The screen looked down on the bar from above and behind it, like looking in through a window set above the mirror. And at the bar was only one solitary customer, a tall lean man in a frock coat and plug hat with a cigar from which smoke curled richly, and a schooner of beer before him. He looked up at the bar mirror, and we saw a lean, evilly humorous face with the Pangborn features clearly marked on it. "Grandpa," Von Juntz whispered.

In a dark angle of the place, Pangborn himself materialized from the machine. We saw a glimmer as he raised the gun.

"See," Von Juntz whispered. "He has forgotten to uncock the safety. Now he has. Now he creeps closer. Soon now we shall know the paradox."

Grandpa Pangborn had put down his cigar. His hand had slid under the lapel of his frock coat. Just before he whirled, I realized that he had been watching Pangborn in the mirror all the time.

He whirled, his hand whipped out from beneath his lapel, and the sound of a gunshot echoed in the saloon. We had a clear view of the angry surprise on Pangborn's face before he toppled nose down into the sawdust. He was quite obviously dead.

"Whippersnapper," Grandpa Pangborn muttered. He holstered his gun and looked up, and his lean face oddly seemed to be looking straight into the peering eye of the time viewer, and into our staring eyes. We could not be seen. . . . Or could we?

Looking at us, he spoke.

"Figure that one out!" said Grandpa Pangborn. I cut the switch, and the viewer went black.

The way I see it, Pangborn vanished, but not in the right way, so Randall owes me nine dollars. But he says he won the bet, and he won't even give me back the three I handed him before Pangborn got into that fool machine. ∞ ∞

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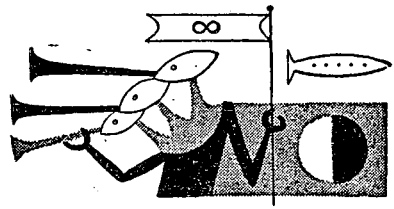
Fanfare



POETRY LEAFLET

by GREGG CALKINS

A TENDER poem of the Old Spaceways titled . . .

"Dad Was All Burned Up Over That One"

I weep.
A cinder, brought upon a gentle breeze, is in my eye.
It makes a tear flow.

I live here.
Home is near the spaceport because my father works there.
He cleans out rocket tubes.

That's strange . . .
The rocket that just left the cinder in my eye—the 8:15—
Was leaving twenty minutes early.

I think I know where that cinder came from.

∞

Twinkle, twinkle little star
I wonder how far off you are?
A million miles, perhaps, or two . . .
I bet *I'm* farther off than you!

Bibbilty bibbilty bibbilty bibbilty bibbilty.

∞

Hey diddle diddle, a cat and a fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon,
Surprising the people who didn't think
Space travel would come so soon.
—old folk tale, 21st Century

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A second tender poem of the Old Spaceways titled . . .

"Watch That First Step—It's A Dilly!"

Had a little trouble this trip.
Coming back from the Luna run I over-corrected.
The Captain says I used up a wee bit too much fuel.

Gosh! White Sands is big!
I'll bet they have a million acres of concrete down there.
And just think—it's all as level as a tabletop.

Usually I love landing time.
There's a terrific thrill to setting a ship down on a pillar of fire.
This time, of course, it will be a bit different.

I wonder if we'll make a very big hole?

∞

"discretion"

So far no living man has dared
To say E is *not* mc^2!

∞

Any spaceman knows this, be he dead or still alive,
That the greatest thing in starships is the Stellar Overdrive—
In the twinkling of a second you can flash from place to place
Merely by short-cutting through a chunk of hyperspace.

Old Spacemen have a legend, though, warning of great danger
In using overdrive. It concerns the starscout *Ranger*.
It seems that she'd been bound for Thanes, clear 'cross galactic rift
But only melted steel was found where she had made the shift.

The answer to what happened wasn't hard to find, as such:
When that damn fool pilot shifted he forgot to use the clutch!

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A third tender poem of the Old Spaceways titled . . .

"It's An Early Sunset For This Time Of Year"

This is White Sands.
It's the biggest spaceport in the world; from here we reach the stars.
We have everything from solid-fuel to antigrav jobs.

Well, here's the pit.
When she's in port the Fomalhaut *Alien Sea* berths here, right on this spot.
Now, of course, she's out in the Magelleans somewhere.

See the blast scars?
She's a million tonner and it takes a heck of a lot to lift her—
Blast area is a mile in diameter when she sits back down.

Say, where did that cloud come from—the one making this shadow?

∞

Lock or berry, capillary, dibble-dibble bom!
Signet weather, altogether, dom dom dom!
—9th Fandom Ritual Chant

∞

A female robot typist from Lyra
Had a fight getting someone to hyra;
But the offer she got
Was turned down on the spot . . .
Seems the boss wanted first to re-wyra.

∞

A wise man of old, after drinking a cask
Of the best 'montillado, set himself a task
Of counting the stars. After nights without slumber
He found that they were of a most fearful number
When by a new way at a sum did arrive
Simply counting the points and dividing by five.

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A fourth tender poem of the Old Spaceways titled . . .

"It's Not The Heat, It's The Humidity"

Space is pretty cold.
It's almost a vacuum, you know, and our survey ship
Is pretty far out from the sun—not too much heat to begin with.

Besides, heat radiates.
Go out on the skin of the beast in a spacesuit sometime.
Listen to your suit heaters turn on as high as they'll go.

Me, I'm in sick-bay.
Frozen feet and hands, they say, and I think that's pretty funny.
Especially since I'm only a steward and not a deck hand or crewman.

Well, those deep-freeze lockers get pretty cold.

∞

Robots are the strangest creatures—they haven't any facial features,
Nor can they show, by deep emotion, their most solicitous devotion.

They are not prone to telling lies; they can't give out heart-rending sighs;
Nor are they slaves to folding greenery. Oh, how I wish *I* were machinery!

∞

(*Whenever circumstances permit,* INFINITY *reprints an item from a fanzine. The idea is to give readers some hint of the variety of entertaining material to be found in these magazines, which are published by fans purely as labors of love. The poems on these pages originally appeared in* OOPSLA, *published by Gregg Calkins, 1039 Third Avenue, Salt Lake City 3, Utah, available from him at 15¢ a copy, and highly recommended by—LTS.*)

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THE WAY OUT

By RICHARD R. SMITH

How do you kill a man without killing him?

Unless that question could be answered, Earth would lose the war, and every Earthman would die!

Illustrated by RICHARD KLUGA

THE ROOM was a maze of mirrors that reflected his nightmare image. At first he had tried to close his eyes but found that they had done something to them. He could not close them and was forced to look at the thing in the hundreds of mirrors, seeing it from all angles.

He had tried to sleep—thinking that, if asleep, he would not see the mirrors and himself. But they had injected drugs into his body—drugs that made sleep

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impossible except when they wanted him to sleep. A human body had to have a minimum of sleep; they knew what that minimum was and gave it to him when they wanted him to have it.

But even sleep was no release. During those first days, he discovered that a man unable to close his eyes will *see* while he sleeps. And in every dream the mirrors and the nightmare were there, superimposed upon the dream as two negatives placed one upon another. If he dreamed that he was a child again, playing in the fields and chasing rabbits, the nightmare image was there, superimposed upon the dream. If he dreamed that he was a teen-ager, walking Betty home from the movies and holding her soft hand in his, it was there—hovering in the air around them. No matter what he dreamed, it was there.

He found that there was one relief from the nightmare and only one. They had left his right arm intact. *In the event,* he thought, *that I give in, I will be able to write the answers they want to know.* But that was not a complete relief. To stare at the smoothness and perfection of flesh on his right arm for long periods was to admit that the rest of his body was . . .

They were clever with pain, he thought. Pain, he had realized during those first days, was a monumental thing to a man. Pain was the first sensation experienced by a man: the slap of the doctor's hand and the first breath of air in lungs unaccustomed to breathing. And pain was the very last sensation that a man experienced: the pain of death. Crowded in between those two sensations that represented a person's life span, pain was the dominant impetus. What drove a man to do anything except the impetus of pain and the instinct to avoid pain? A man did a million things to avoid physical pain. To avoid hunger pains, a man would eat; to avoid the pain of coldness, a man would light a fire; to avoid aching muscles, a man would make a wheel to carry his burden; to lessen that burden, a man would split an atom. . . . And a man did a million other things to avoid emotional pain. To avoid the pain of loneliness, a man would make friends; to avoid the pain of boredom, a man would play a game; to avoid the pain of ugliness, a man would create beauty. . . .

Not an unpleasant reality, he realized. Not unpleasant because it was necessary. Nothing in the universe moved unless a force pushed or pulled it. A man unable to sense physical or emotional pain would do *nothing.* There would be nothing to push him. As wind moved clouds, pain moved man.

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The sight of his body was not exactly painful to him. They had not disfigured him; they had only *changed* him. To disassociate him from his body, no doubt. What they had done to him many would call an "atrocity," he realized. But, in a war, every time one soldier killed another, it was an "atrocity"—one man had taken the life of another. *They* had a job to do and they were doing it.

Successfully, he knew. When they came the next time, he would tell them what they wanted to know. *Want to know where Fort Meade is located on Earth? Give me a map and I'll show you. How many soldiers do we have in the mountain range a hundred miles from here? I'll give you my best estimate. I'll tell you anything you want!*

Pain was the impetus to push a man, he knew. They had pushed him and pushed him. Doing their job. And they had pushed him far enough. A man was not linked to other men and his nation and his world by tangible threads. A man was separate and distinct; a man's body was a world in itself. He had been pushed into his world by pain. Somewhere—beyond the wall of pain that came or vanished when they wanted—somewhere, he had friends, an army, a world called Earth. By they didn't matter. *His* world mattered. . . .

And, oddly, he wasn't afraid of pain any more. It was just a thing, a thing to be avoided in any way. And he wasn't to be pitied. They had *changed* him. Sergeant Chester Gregg wasn't a man any more. He was something that could be added to and subtracted from, a pliable thing that could be prodded and molded, an object that could be pushed this way and that way. . . .

MURPHY raised his head. He could tell from the flashes of artillery fire that they were surrounded. Antarian artillery had a purplish flash of light that their own guns did not have. And he could see: in every direction there was an occasional flash of purplish light. The flashes formed a circle—a circle around them.

He lowered himself into the foxhole.

"What?" Hank inquired.

"Surrounded."

"Are you sure?" Hank crouched in the semi-darkness as if about to pounce on something.

"Damn it, if you don't believe me, *take a look!*"

Hank hesitated. He was a tall, lanky person with red hair and boyish freckles. He had an awkward, self-conscious manner, and despite his powerful body, the freckles and manner made others think of him as a boy rather than a man. He was eighteen and combat had hardened his muscles

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without hardening his appearance. "I believe you," he said. "Do you think we'll get out?"

"Hard to tell. Maybe."

Murphy leaned back and looked up at the dark sky. It was filled with stars, stars that twinkled, and intermingled with them were other points of light that were not stars. They were atomic explosions, and unlike the stars, they did not twinkle. An atomic explosion in outer space, without the pressure of atmosphere, expanded tremendously. When it reached the limit of expansion, it faded, and watching a battle in outer space was like watching a maze of tiny blinking lights. Murphy watched those tiny blips of light every night. One night, if he lived long enough, there would be no blips of light and that would mean that one side was beaten.

They were fighting and dying on Antares but their battle was a secondary one. It was the battle in outer space that would win the war. If the Antarians won that battle, then every Earthman on Antares would die because there would be no more supplies. If Earth won that battle, the Antarians would be beaten since they would have no way to stop Earth from sending more men and more supplies.

He closed his eyes and tried to concentrate on the problem of saving Hank's life. That was his habit: every time he went into combat, he picked someone like Hank—a kid—and stuck with him. He would worry about that kid, whoever he might be, and try to keep him out of tight spots. It was his way of protecting himself. Whenever he worried about his own life, his mind always froze. But worrying about someone else was different.

"I think I'd rather die than be captured," Hank said. "I heard they have ways of making a guy talk—ways of making a guy tell them anything."

Murphy nodded his head in agreement. It would be better to die than to be captured. The war with the Antarians was different from the World Wars on Earth. Antarians were aliens and resembled lizards more than men. There was no way for them to disguise themselves effectively and they had no agents on Earth to learn the location of factories and military installations. From a thousand miles in space—if one of their ships were fast enough—they could photograph Earth's surface. Closer than a thousand miles, rockets from Earth's interceptor system could destroy a ship. Atomic rockets dropped from Antarian ships could zigzag through Earth's atmosphere at tremendous speeds and fifty per cent got through the interceptor system. But a ship containing enough fuel to take it from An-

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tares to Earth and back was large and unmanueverable, and venturing closer than a thousand miles was fatal. And a photograph taken from a thousand miles does not show factories and military installations. Through magnification, the photograph will show rivers, mountain ranges, land masses, and varicolored patches of land that could be cities or *anything*. So the Antarians had been forced to hurl atomic bombs aimlessly. Those that got through the defensive system usually struck deserted areas.

The Antarians had only one choice: capture as many soldiers as possible and make them tell where military targets were located. And to them, men were an alien form of life. Their science was not adapted to the human body; they had no drugs to affect the human mind. In the middle of an interplanetary war, they could not spare the workers, time, wealth, and effort to invent drugs that had taken mankind itself years to produce. But it took them only a few minutes to make a whip. . . .

As Murphy listened, the distant rumble of exploding shells grew in volume. They were "walking" shells across the surrounded area. He flattened himself against the bottom of the foxhole and covered his ears with his hands. Even through his hands, the roar of explosions was deafening, and he felt the ground shake while shell fragments whistled through the air above.

That was Antarian tactics, he remembered. Whenever possible, they surrounded an area; pounded it until there were only a few men left and then charged with their infantry, taking as many prisoners as possible.

The roar of exploding shells diminished in volume as the barrage moved farther away.

Silence.

Murphy checked his rifle and rose. He looked across a desolate terrain covered with craters and smouldering shell fragments. The forest near them—that weird forest of hundred-foot trees with green trunks and yellow leaves—was almost gone. The barrage had left only a few trees upright. Trees with their branches torn from them; trees that looked like shadowy fingers pointing at the stars.

"I suppose they'll be coming now," Hank said.

"Any minute. They always follow a barrage."

"I won't surrender," Hank said as he checked his rifle. "I know that. There wouldn't be anything to gain."

"You couldn't surrender if you wanted to."

"Huh?"

"The Army doesn't allow it. You see, the Army tells you what to do, how to do it, when to do

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it, and where to do it. There's regulations in the manuals to cover *everything*. If there aren't regulations about something, that's because the Army doesn't allow it. There are no regulations about how to surrender. That means you *can't* surrender."

"Suppose you haven't got anything to fight with?"

"No dice. If you've only got one bullet, you fire that bullet. Then you use your bayonet. If your bayonet breaks, then you pick up rocks and throw them, and if there aren't any rocks around, then you attack with your bare hands. In other words, you keep fighting until you kill them or they kill you. If you surrender, you're a traitor."

Hank was silent for a while. "If that's so," he said, "why do they have regulations about what to do *after* you're captured? You know, that 'Give only your name, rank, and serial number' stuff."

"That," explained Murphy with mock impatience, "is for those cases when a guy might be captured while unconscious. The Army's sensible. It knows you can't fight if you've been knocked unconscious by something."

"Did you hear the rumor," Hank went on, "that every guy going into combat has something done to him so he'll kill himself if he's captured? Hypnotism or something?"

"Uh-huh." Murphy wished Hank hadn't mentioned that. He remembered, there at Fort Hendricks, something strange had happened. Take a battalion of men, line them up outside a hospital. One by one, as the men enter a room, give them an injection that knocks them cold. Keep them unconscious for days while you feed them through the veins, and then revive them, put them in a formation and march them back to their barracks without an explanation. Do something like that and you'll cause all sorts of rumors. Those men will wonder what happened to them while they were unconscious. The more they wonder, the more fantastic the rumors will get. . . .

"I doubt it," Murphy said. They had been whispering. No enemy followed a barrage so close that they were killed by their own shells, and Antarians could only move at a certain speed. That always left—immediately after a barrage—a few minutes during which they could talk or whisper in safety. But that time was limited and they fell silent now.

Murphy thought, *Somewhere out there, lizard-like things are crawling toward us. Any minute now, they'll be close enough to hear us if we make a sound, and they'll be waiting, hoping to hear a sound. They'll be holding their weapons with their tentacles as they move closer. They should be*

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in a zoo where you could see them on Sunday afternoons and laugh. They're funny-looking, but it's hard to laugh at them while they're trying to kill you—

A rumble of sound.

Murphy swung his rifle, aiming through the sights. It was a tank. They had no hand grenades, and it was impossible to knock one out with a rifle. But, he reminded himself, he had explained to Hank. It was a soldier's job to fight, even with rocks if necessary.

No. It was one of their tanks!

"Let's go! Maybe they'll give us a ride!"

They climbed out of the foxhole. Murphy ran toward the tank, raising his arms above his head—not a gesture of surrender, but a means of recognition. Antarians could walk on their hind legs but their physiology did not allow them to raise their forelegs above their heads as men could. At night, when nothing could be seen clearly, it was the most effective password.

The tank stopped.

A voice came at them through the darkness, "What the hell do you want?"

"Got room for two more?" Murphy inquired. "Give us a ride out. We're low on ammunition."

A moment's hesitation; then, "Get in."

Climbing into the tank was like climbing into a dark well. When the lid closed behind them, there was *no* light. The darkness annoyed Murphy, but he realized it was necessary. There were no slits for the crew to see through: slits allowed bullets, radiation, and poison gas to enter a tank. The crew observed through periscopes that fitted tight against their faces; they were trained to work in the dark.

It was a long, rough ride through the night. Murphy listened to the crew members, the roar of the motor. Now and then there was the sharp bark of the tank's cannon, and even through four inches of steel and lead he heard the roar of shock waves from distant atomic explosions.

Hank whispered, "That wasn't right, was it? I mean, leaving like that and—"

"Ever hear of 'strategic withdrawal'?" Murphy asked. "We'll live to fight another day."

Murphy slept at times. One time, after being awakened by a nearby explosion, one of the tank crew asked him his name and what unit he was with. He said he would radio their unit and ask if their CO had orders for them. Murphy gave his name and unit, then fell asleep again.

Sometime during the night, he felt a hand shaking him. "You lucky stiffs," a voice in the darkness said. "Your CO says you're to return to Earth on the next ship."

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COLONEL DONOVAN climbed out of the jeep and walked a distance. He was a tall, husky man with powerful shoulders and prematurely gray hair. His face was hard and weather-beaten, and his eyes held the only hint of his intelligence. He did not have the delicate features and slender fingers of an intellectual, but his gray eyes were cold and alert. He had climbed to the rank of colonel partly by his physical strength and partly by that deceptive intelligence. He had an aggressive way of tackling a problem, a way of prodding it and beating it with his mind as if it were a physical thing and he were beating it with his fists. During his career, he had solved numerous problems with his different approach. The intellectuals, the men who solved problems, had minds as alike as if they had been cut from the same pattern. A definite type of physique produced a definite mentality-type, and a definite mentality-type produced a definite way of thinking. The intellectuals were similar in body and mind, and their answers were often too similar. When the UN wanted a *different* answer, it called upon men such as Donovan.

And Donovan had a new problem.

He lit a cigarette without looking away from the ruins. The ruins of Fort Meade; he could see at a glance that it had been a direct hit. Every building had been leveled, the ground scorched and fused into weird glass-like substances. There had been no burial details: of all the thousands of soldiers at the Fort, there had been no remains to bury.

He had no special purpose in viewing the ruins except to goad his mind. Reports on his desk in the New Pentagon had informed him of the facts: seven military bases such as Fort Meade had been bombed by the Antarians. All direct hits.

It meant one of two things. One: the Antarians could take a photograph of Earth from a thousand miles and spot military installations on that photograph. Two: they had tortured prisoners and learned the locations. Number one was improbable; number two was very probable.

He wondered, *How do you prevent a man from giving information?* It was an important problem. There seemed to be no way to prevent the Antarians from taking prisoners, no way to prevent them from torturing prisoners. If they captured enough prisoners, they could learn the location of every military base and war plant on Earth. Every soldier knew the location of something vital; almost every soldier could point to it on an aerial map. It was a simple mat-

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ter of spotting rivers and mountain ranges and judging distances.

The possibilities of preventing their men from talking were few, he realized. There was the standard answer: give a pill to every soldier and tell him to swallow the pill if he's captured. But that was the wrong answer. It had been used before, but only in the case of espionage agents. Used on an army of men, it would have a demoralizing effect. It would imply that you expected them to be captured. And what percentage of men would commit suicide? Besides that, the news would sooner or later leak out to the civilian population and have a demoralizing effect upon *them*. How would millions of mothers and wives feel if they knew their sons and husbands had been ordered to kill themselves if captured?

No, suicide pills were not the answer. It had to be something different, something original, and as foolproof as anything could be. Preferably a way to kill a captured soldier—a way that the soldier was not aware of. Death seemed the only solution. Any man, tortured hard enough and long enough, would talk. How could you keep that man from talking except by killing him? And still, it wasn't *right* to kill your own men!

How, he thought, *can you kill a man without killing him?*

HANK was pacing the floor. "We're on our way, Murph. Back to Earth. No more combat. We'll train other guys how to fight. Instructors. What a deal! Weekend passes, girls, beer, fried chicken, real milk—"

"Lay off," Murphy said. "We aren't there yet."

Sitting there on the edge of the cot, he struggled for a sense of reality. Nothing seemed real. Nothing had seemed real since they left the foxhole. There everything had seemed real: the coldness and wetness of the mud beneath them, the stars in the sky above them, a thousand other things. But, in the tank, there had been nothing but darkness and voices in the darkness. The tank had broken through the Antarian lines and taken them directly to a spaceport. There, in a thick fog—so thick that you could see only a few feet in any direction—they had boarded the ship. In the darkened ship, they had been led to this compartment. They had seen only two men aboard the ship. One crew member—seen at a distance—and Gregg, the ship's captain. Now they were in outer space, in a small compartment aboard a huge ship. It didn't seem real, and he felt as if they were walking through a shadowy dream.

The door opened and Captain Chester Gregg stepped into the room.

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Gregg, Murphy reflected, looked as if he had been taken apart and put together again. There were lines in his face: not lines that came from facial muscles, but the clean-cut lines of a surgeon's scapel—lines that divided his face into small sections. And the flesh from his forehead to his chin did not change shade gradually. Each section was a slightly different shade than the section next to it. Not a hideous effect, but noticeable when you looked at him closely. Gregg was evidently conscious of his appearance, for he stayed in the shadows as much as possible.

Gregg glanced around the room and grinned. "How do you like your quarters? Fancy, huh?"

"Great," Murphy said. "Almost as good as the Ritz. Are we the only passengers?"

Gregg nodded his head affirmatively. "We had to leave in a hurry. We were scheduled to take more men back, but the Antarians were about to take over that port. We were lucky to get out when we did."

Gregg hesitated, then went on, "You guys are going to have a tough job when you get back. Not as easy as you might think. I know. I was in the infantry for a while—in a training outfit. Hard work."

He placed some papers on the table. "Here's your homework."

"Homework?" Hank repeated.

"It's the newest thing," Gregg explained. "They figure that men who've been in combat with the Antarians can train recruits better than men back on Earth who've never even seen the Antarians. The plan is to train men like yourselves on the way back to Earth. No time wasted. That is, they plan to teach you how to train others. We have a colonel and a couple lieutenants aboard. You fill out those papers and they'll judge your knowledge of military procedure. Then they'll know exactly how much they'll have to teach you."

When Gregg left, Murphy examined the papers. As Gregg said, the papers were a test of their knowledge of military procedure. There were yes and no questions: questions such as *Describe procedure to infiltrate enemy lines, Describe procedure for establishing night patrols, Describe alternate code system.* Hundreds of questions.

And an aerial map. The question: *Give the approximate location of Fort Johnson.* And in small print at the bottom, the notation that this was a test of memory and ability to judge distance.

"Look at this, Hank."

Hank studied the map and question. "That's easy," he said. "I was stationed at Fort Johnson. There's Salt Lake. See? Fort Johnson is about—"

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"I said *look,* not *talk!*" Murphy rose and glared at Hank. "You're stupid," he added.

"What's the matter with you?" Hank inquired, his jaw sagging.

"You're stupid," Murphy repeated. "Don't you ever question anything? This whole thing smells fishy." He paced the floor, glaring at the metal walls. There was something wrong with the compartment. It was like any compartment aboard any ship, but there was something *wrong.* He knew there was something wrong, but he couldn't pinpoint it. "It doesn't make sense. We were in a foxhole a few hours ago, and now we're on a ship headed for Earth. It doesn't make sense."

"We're going to be instructors."

"And that map is fishy," Murphy continued. "That's the sort of thing the Antarians would want to know. They have to photograph Earth from a thousand miles out. They'd like to know exactly where Fort Johnson is."

"Well, so what?"

"So *what?* Hasn't it occurred to you that maybe we're prisoners of the Antarians?"

"Are you serious?" Hank inquired. "How can we be prisoners?" He glanced around the room and shrugged his shoulders. "We were picked up by one of our own tanks and—"

"The Antarians capture our tanks now and then. It could have been a trick."

"Our own men were aboard the tank!"

"We didn't *see* them. It was too dark inside the tank to see anything."

"We heard them," Hank insisted.

"That doesn't mean anything." Murphy remembered that they had been warned about Antarian "talkie" machines. The Antarians frequently tricked or forced a prisoner to talk for hours. The conversation was recorded, broken down according to individual sounds and recorded in a "talkie" machine. The machine resembled a typewriter, and an Antarian could reproduce any vocal sound by pressing one of its keys. A skilled Antarian linguist could use one of the machines and carry on a conversation with perfect English. They had been used during attempts to infiltrate their lines at night but, Murphy realized, one *could* have been used in the tank.

"Take it easy," Hank said. "You're imagining things. We're on one of our own ships!"

"Are we? What have we seen of this ship except the corridor and this compartment? It could be. . . . Well, this compartment could be like a stage. It was so foggy outside, we couldn't see anything."

He paused to light a cigarette

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and continued, "Gregg gave me the idea. I've seen Gregg before —at Fort Meade. I remember him but he doesn't remember me. Of course, that's natural. You meet a lot of guys in the army and you can't remember them all. But Gregg was in the Infantry like he said, and now he's a ship's captain. Our Army doesn't work like that. The Infantry doesn't take a man and train him to be a spaceship captain! That's the sort of thing the Antarians would do. They have a screwy theory about their soldiers being versatile."

Hank's eyebrows rose; there was a trace of doubt on his face. "We're here," he said nervously. "We can hear the ship's engines."

Murphy listened. True, they could hear a ship's engines. "Could be a recording," he said.

"If there's a possibility, maybe we shouldn't talk so damned much." Hank rose to his feet, frowning. "If you're right, they may have hidden microphones."

"What's the difference?" If they were prisoners, Murphy thought, there was no reason to keep the Antarians from knowing that they knew. There would be no chance to escape, no way out. Antarians took their prisoners far behind their lines. A man, a creature who walked upright on two legs, could not disguise himself and pass unnoticed among creatures that resembled lizards and crawled on four legs. No, if they were prisoners they would be well behind the lines; there would be no way to escape. *But,* he wondered, *if we're prisoners, why are they trying to keep us from realizing it?* They had used a trick to get information, but they could have gotten the same information through torture. He knew: he was brave enough to die for his country, but not strong enough to—

What's wrong with this compartment? he interrupted the chain of thought. There was *something* wrong with the compartment. He could sense the wrongness. But what could be wrong with cots, a table, four walls, a ceiling, and a floor? There was nothing wrong with them, so that meant there was something wrong that was not in the compartment; a something that came in to the compartment from outside. *What,* he thought wildly, *is not in here but comes in here from outside?*

"I've got it!"

Hank jumped, startled. "What?"

"Vibrations," Murphy said. "There aren't any!"

Hank shrugged his shoulders.

"It's important," Murphy said. "Remember the troopship that took us to Antares? I remember I had trouble sleeping because of the vibrations. Every ship has

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vibrations. The engines kick up one hell of a fuss and the vibrations travel all over the ship. Not so bad in some places, but you can feel them anywhere."

He pressed his hands against a wall. Hank, some of the color draining from his face, did the same. "See?" Murphy inquired. "There are no vibrations. We're supposed to be in outer space, headed for Earth. *There should be vibrations!*"

He hit the wall with his fist.

He hit it harder.

The wall didn't sound *right.*

Taking his bayonet, he jabbed the wall. The blade cut through a thin layer of metal—a layer of metal no thicker than a sixteenth of an inch.

Laughing wildly, he cut a large rectangle; the section clattered to the floor, exposing a layer of wood. He kicked at the wood—dry, crumbling wood that gave way beneath his foot.

He climbed through the opening.

Hank followed him.

COLONEL DONOVAN studied the papers before him with blank eyes. Lately the Project had started to annoy his conscience, and the fact that it was a logical move did not lessen the annoyance. There at Fort Meade, he had faced the problem: How can you keep men from giving information when captured? It had been a vital problem. Without a solution, the Antarians could have learned countless military secrets and ultimately won the war. Death had seemed the only solution, but it had not seemed right to deliberately murder their own men. He had asked himself: How can you kill a man without killing him? And he had come up with the answer: Drive him insane.

They had placed him in charge of the Project, and he had organized a group of psychologists, psychiatrists, chemists, doctors, and sociologists. He had asked them: Can you install the seeds of schizophrenia in a soldier—seeds that will bloom upon the realization that he is a prisoner of the enemy and *only* upon that realization?

The answer had been "Maybe"—and they had started on the Project.

The system had been developed after months of research and experiment. It worked through a combination of surgery, hypnosis; psychiatric, encephalographic, and chemical treatment. All given to a soldier while under drugs and hypnosis.

Although the originator of the system, no one had told him exactly how it worked. In such matters, it was the army's policy not to tell anyone who did not *have* to know. And, not being a scientist, he would not have un-

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derstood all the mechanics if explained to him.

But he had a vague concept: A soldier realizes that he is a prisoner of the enemy, and the realization triggers a reaction planted in his mind. A reaction placed there by surgery, hynosis; psychiatric, encephalographic and chemical treatment. The reaction forced the soldier into a schizophrenic dream—entirely separated from the world. A tight, permanent dream dissociated from all sensory perception. A dream that not even Antarian whips could reach.

And it annoyed his conscience: he was responsible for the insanity of thousands of their men. He could not help feeling that perhaps, if he had tried harder, he could have thought of another way. . . .

The door opened and Phillips burst into the room in his customary manner. He threw some papers on Donovan's desk. "Our new project," he said. "A tough one. Impossible, I should say."

While Donovan glanced at the papers, Phillips slumped in a chair and lit a cigarette. "The Antarians have made a countermove," he explained. "We found a way to prevent them from torturing prisoners and getting information, but our system depends upon the realization by a soldier that he *is* a prisoner. The Antarians learned that and now they have a new approach. They use our tanks that they've captured and pretend to be our troops while they trick information from our men. You see, our men have the treatment, but they don't realize they're prisoners, so the treatment doesn't work. Our new project is to find a way that our men will realize they're prisoners despite any trickery." He shrugged his shoulders as if the problem were a tangible thing and he wished to thrust it aside. "Anyway, the war is almost over and the Antarians are losing. I don't think it'll make any difference whether we find a solution or not. The war will probably be over before—"

He hesitated when he noticed Donovan's expression. "What's the matter?" he inquired. "You look sick."

"Nothing."

Phillips nodded his head. "I get it. The same old stuff. Your conscience is bothering you again." He leaned back in the chair, placed his hands behind his head and looked up at the ceiling. "You're foolish to let it bother you. You know what happened to me yesterday? On the way home, I had a flat tire. It was raining, muddy as all hell and I messed up my last clean uniform. The tire was ruined—now I haven't got a spare and can't buy one because of this damned war. My wife's sister, Louise, is stay-

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ing with us now. Her husband was killed on Antares and she cries all night, every night. Now and then, she gets Martha crying. Last night I couldn't stand it so I went out and had a few drinks. I got charged with drunken driving, and when I got home this morning, I really caught it! Martha's talking about getting a divorce. She says I—"

Donovan groaned. "Phil. I'm interested in your problems. Someday we'll sit down together and cry on each other's shoulder, but—"

Phillips raised a hand. "I was trying to illustrate how we all have a hundred big and little troubles every day. The fact that the system prevented thousands of men from being tortured does not matter to you. Your stupid conscience hurts because you're responsible for driving men insane. But you don't understand. It's not a simple case of schizophrenia that our men get. It's a schizophrenic *dream*. The system blocks all sensory contacts and speeds up the mind. You know how a person dreams only a few seconds before he wakes up and that dream seems days or weeks long? Can you imagine how much a dream can be speeded up and clarified by drugs, how much a dream can be controlled by hypnotic suggestion, how much experience can be—"

MURPHY SAW that they were on a street, the tall, angular shadows of strange buildings all around them. He heard a shuffling noise and turned to see Antarians crawling toward them.

They were prisoners! For some reason, the Antarians had kept them from realizing it and—

A brief, intense pain ripped through his skull. He closed his eyes for a few seconds, then opened them. . . .

The Antarians were dead, their bodies riddled with bullets. There at the end of the street—*their troops!*

He looked up at the sky. There were no blinking pinpoints of light among the stars. The war was over! They had won!

The years that followed were good ones for Murphy. Although he had never written a line before, he wrote a novel about his war experiences and it became a best-seller. He went to Hollywood when a motion picture producer purchased the story and, unbelievably, became an actor. He had never considered himself a handsome man but millions of viewers considered him handsome and beautiful women were attracted to him. He married and became the father of two children. Life seemed like a dream . . . a perfect dream in which, day after day, year after year, everything was perfect. . . .

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Feedback

BOY, am I in a dilemma! Here is James Blish who answers my strictures concerning his use of the number googol by admitting he used it a little loosely (if you call missing by approximately 80 orders of magnitude, loose) but denying any fracture of scientific fact by pulling out the *deus ex machina* of a Milnean universe. (How'd I know he was a crypto-Milnean?)

So I'm ready to answer back but what has happened? He is now an editor! You think I'm going to fight with an editor? Me? I kick little puppies, strangle kittens before drowning them, push old women into sewers and beat my wife, but never shall I raise my hand against an editor. *(What, never?—LTS)*

Of course, Jim picks bones with my own faster-than-light travel, and my answer to that one is: "Oh, yea-a-a-ah?" (There's a stopper if I ever heard one.)—Isaac Asimov.

∞

As promised, here are the results of the "Favorite Novel Poll" for which we solicitated in the January issue of INFINITY. First we would like to thank everyone who cooperated in making this poll possible.

Following is the list, in order of popularity, which was determined by the collected votes of science fiction fans:

1. *City and the Stars,* Clarke
2. *Demolished Man,* Bester
3. *Foundation and Empire,* Asimov
4. *More than Human,* Sturgeon
5. *Childhood's End,* Clarke
6. *Timeliner,* Maine
7. *Double Star,* Heinlein
8. *City,* Simak; *Fahrenheit 451,* Bradbury; *Mission of Gravity,* Clement
9. *Foundation,* Asimov
10. *Martian Chronicles,* Bradbury

Honorable Mention:

1. *Pawns of Null-A,* Van Vogt
2. *End of Eternity,* Asimov
3. *Slan,* Sloane *(A. E. Van Sloane?—LTS)*

The race was a very close one, which is apparent by the three way tie in the number eight position. *Martian Chronicles* started off with a high lead but fell down in the later moments of the poll. The top three rated very high and then there was a steep drop to the fourth position. It is noticed in the first four novels that four distinctly different styles of writing are represented.

The above thirteen novels were rated on a point system, depending on its position in the voter's list. The following five novels were

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rated on its representation in the poll as a whole:

1. *City and the Stars*
2. *Foundation and Empire*
3. *Demolished Man*
4. *Foundation*
5. *Childhood's End*

It is interesting to note that *Foundation,* while rated 9th on the first list, found itself 4th on the above list. You may draw your own conclusions on this comparison. Hats off to Mr. Clarke on his *City and the Stars,* for as you can see, the fans thought enough of it to give it a rating of 1 on both lists. We feel that the above two lists should give an accurate account of what the readers want in a novel.

Numerous authors had their works appear in the poll, but the following three authors, in order, had their works appear more than any others: Asimov, Van Vogt, Clarke.

We realize that some authors have written more novels than others, but this was taken into consideration.

Again we would like to thank everyone, and a special thanks to Larry Shaw (he printed the letter!) who has helped make the poll the success it was. Also we hope that INFINITY will keep up the high standards it has set previously.

We would be glad to hear from anybody who would like to comment on the poll.—Dick Perry, 14469 Summerfield Road, University Heights, Ohio; Michael Solomon, 2441 Laurelhurst Drive, University Heights, Ohio.

∞

Anent Damon's daemon, F. E. Edwards, and his letter in your November issue, may I say that I was avidly looking forward to the former's reply. After all, Knight is a clever fellow and I wanted to see if he could put all of his pieces back together after being taken so thoroughly apart. Evidently you shared this interest too because you announced that Knight "would be granted equal space next issue, and will very likely answer most of (many counts)."

We now have the present issue with Mr. Knight's rejoinder. Mr. Edwards he says is a "noisy creep." Period. End of rejoinder. I looked all over the magazine for more but that was all. And that, I am afraid, is not good enough. It would not be good enough for a barroom argument, let alone INFINITY. In fact, it was decidedly irritating to me until I realized that Edwards had made all his contentions good and had done it right out of Knight's mouth.

The only question now is: how will Mr. Edwards have his trophy mounted? Will he have it stuffed, on the mantelpiece, or will he be content with Knight's head hanging from the wall? Or, with a gesture of international good will, he might send the remains to that wax museum in Paris where all might see and wonder.—George Ebey, 2043 7th Avenue, Oakland, California.

(Stick around, George. I have a feeling this fight is only beginning. —LTS)

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I'm not mad because you didn't print my letter. Gee, it's happened so often that one gets used to it after a while. However, when I *do* see my name in print, why goshogollygeewhiz, it's nice.

But an explanation is due as to why I haven't kommented since your editorial appeared; I've *still* been buying INFINITY and *SFA* nice and regular. *(Oh, so* you're *the one.—LTS)* Let me flatter you by saying that they are all that I read these days. You must know how it is with the active fan and—but wait, t'heck with this useless trivia, I was saying why it was that I haven't writ you a letter recently. Here it is: I've been so busy reading the mags, I haven't had time to komment. So there you are.

So, a quick comment or two on INFINITY: Emsh outdid himself on the cover, with a wonderful choice of colors, and a (ahem) beautiful background (or foreground, for that matter). And yes, by George, I *do* like the cover format. Inside: Orchids to Wilson for his masterful "And Then the Town Took Off." Roses to Sheckley for his nicely-handled "Accept No Substitutes." Rosebuds to Budrys for the loose, but entertaining "Never Meet Again." More from him, he can do as well, and better, if he tries. Grind some tea leaves for Young and tell him to do better than "The Leaf." Send a book of matches to Wellen; sooner or later he's going to be getting cold writing stuff like "Note for a Time Capsule." As to Damond Knight—excuse me; damond knight *(I have a feeling you're not excused.—LTS)*—he is, to my knowledge, the first science fiction critique to express his own opinions without fear nor prejudice. Somebody said something about him criticizing a story he took for his magazine *Worlds Beyond*. So what? There are some stories that I liked three or four years ago, too, but upon re-reading them, I dislike them violently. Who knows—in a few years I might re-read this copy of INFINITY and find that I like everything in reverse order. Liked "Fanfare," and I'm glad to see it back as a department. Your editorials, Mr. Shaw, are becoming more and more pleasing to me, Mr. Shaw, so keep it up, Mr. Shaw. Please. "Feedback" is the best ever. I get the same, rich-tasting feeling *(So stop biting your nails.—LTS)* when I read it as I do when I re-read La Viz from *Planet*. More power to you!

How was that for a *brief* rundown?—Rich Brown, 127 Roberts Street, Pasadena, California.

(As a run-downer, you're brief, all right. But your paragraphs are dillies!—LTS)

∞

I have before me your 15th issue (March) and feel it's about time I let you know what I think of your magazine. This issue is about average in quality, but cannot be compared with some of your better efforts, particularly #1 ("The Star," the finest short sf story I have ever had the pleasure to read), and #6 ("The Superstition Seeders," which, if expanded to book-

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length, would be the best novel I have read). Wellen cannot really do full justice to a story told in the first person, and without the pyrotechnical passages in third person all his work would be as minor as "Note for a Time Capsule." Please try to get some more top stuff from him; go as far as to reject all his first-person tales if you have to. Other stories in it are enjoyable to varying degrees; Silverberg did very well with his novelet which is the strongest piece in the issue. All of his stories are, of course, solidly written, and most are thoroughly enjoyable as was this. The Sheckley was passable, but I think he should have sold it to *Playboy*, sort of like "Love Inc" in treatment. I *don't* think that cover blurb would have much effect on the average sf reader, but would serve rather to attract the types who regularly read the girly mags and wouldn't appreciate good sf if they saw it. But I guess you have to watch the ol' circulation. Emsh was not at his best on the cover either—the girl looks as though she had a toothache or something. And where was Schoenherr this time? He was fast becoming my favorite artist (I like his bem on *SFA*, even) when he disappears. *(He bought an MG.—LTS)* Please, more Schoenherr. A cover, mayhap? *(Mayhap.—LTS)*

Your letter pages are by far the most interesting in the field, although the controversy raging for the past few months seems to have died down. Particularly liked knight's short rebound on the hysterical letter; serves Beaumont right. And I still have implicit faith in his reviews—it's really a shame it wouldn't be feasible for some paperback publisher to reprint *In Search of Wonder*—I would like to have it but $4.00, well. And as for all those old-time authors, please, no "Vortex Blaster" types in INFINITY. What's *SFA* for, anyhow? I like your new logo very much, but that little colored strip down the edge detracts from the effect. Do away with this and you will have, as far as I'm concerned, a perfect layout. I find the often-appearing letters of Alma Hill most interesting because of the highly individualistic sentence structure which is such that re-reading produces a different meaning. Very uncontroversial, since one need only read it over until one finds a meaning which agrees with one's own opinions. I do not mean this in a derogatory sense; on the contrary, I think it pretty wonderful, a talent which if properly used could make her rich.

My overall opinion of INFINITY, then, is that it is always enjoyable, occasionally spectacular, and obviously a labor of love. Keep up the good work, go monthly, and try, if possible, to get some stuff by Lloyd Biggle, Jr. I'll be entirely happy with it, then.—Larry C. Stone, 891 Lee Street, White Rock, B. C., Canada.

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I know this will never hit your "Feedback" since the letters are invariably composed of likes and dislikes of stories, authors, illustra-

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tions and advice on how to run your magazine. It's really astonishing how positive they are about what is right or wrong with such a vast range of subjects. No one, but *no* one is so qualified, except, perhaps, Damon Knight.

I have long been intrigued by the controversy over this gentleman and have literally cringed at some of the crude and emotional attacks, both pro and con. Perhaps it would help to remind them that this is a man, a human being certainly, but he is also, for this purpose, a profession, as clearly defined as a medical doctor and just as eminently qualified in his field to practice, to make a diagnosis, to be listened to with respect. When this man says a story is sick, it *is*, whether you like it or not.

Ah, yes, Damon Knight, the dog catcher, the truant officer, the boy next door who told you when you were five years old that there was no Santa Claus.

It is amusing how one adult (I assume they are) will kick and scream when he dares to rip apart their shimmering curtain while another will look out at you from the pages with worldly eyes, with jutting chin and stiffened spine, mumbling something about "Good show, old man. Put things in their proper place—" (and all that rot) and all the time their lower lip is trembling.

This is one of the most endearing and exasperating traits of the human race, this reluctance to part with their fantasy, or child world. None of us ever lose it entirely. Most of us recall the bitter-sweet memory of its going.

I recall as a small child running away from home to see a forbidden "carny" show. Forbidden because *they* said it was dirty, vulgar and cheap.

Oh, but it wasn't. The lights whirled so beautifully; the smells of the animals, the hot dogs and pungent sawdust were heady wine and ambrosia. Jostling, milling crowds caught me up in a roar of sound and motion that swelled and pressed around me until I almost suffocated with the happiness.

Suddenly, the lights began to dim and go out; the crowds swirling and thinning as they rushed quietly away. A cold wind blew sharply through the midway, hurrying the stragglers as rain crackled against the tattered awnings. The popcorn man slammed down the wooden sides of his wagon with a muttered curse that echoed in my heart, for an era had passed, in a moment of time, leaving the little sadness, the nostalgia for something that never was.

And so, mon ami, one must turn back to the mothers and the Knights for guidance, and for warmth from the fires of their knowledge and wisdom. It is the beginning of maturity.

Please tell Mr. Knight for me that he doesn't need retooling for he is, in my opinion, rather magnificent.

Oh, shucks (Mr. Knight) you're welcome.—Helen L. Roake, 1722 South Victory Boulevard, Apartment #3, Glendale 1, California.

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To This Earthman on the Planet "Solaria" An Unclad Girl Was Far More Dangerous Than

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by Isaac Asimov

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